

# THE STRAITS TIMES



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## Tougher measures planned to strengthen copyright

They will better protect creators and give more access to copyrighted material for some users

**Linette Lai**  
Political Correspondent

Creators will see their rights protected more robustly while others will enjoy greater access to copyrighted material if it is in the public interest as the Law Ministry (MinLaw) pushes for changes to the Copyright Act.

Meanwhile, there will be new enforcement measures to prevent the import and sale of set-top boxes used to access content from unauthorised sources.

The ministry, together with the

Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (Ipos), yesterday released details of these proposed changes in the 70-page Singapore Copyright Review Report.

The report makes 16 proposals, including a key one that creators will own the copyright to all commissioned works by default, unless they agree otherwise in writing. Currently, the party that commissions a work owns its copyright.

Changing the law “protects unknown creators, who may not understand the law, in less than ideal scenarios where there are no contracts dealing with copyright own-

ership”, MinLaw said in a statement yesterday.

Another proposal is for creators to be given a new right to be attributed as the creator of their work, even if they have sold the copyright to it. This means that anyone using a work publicly, such as posting it on the Internet, will have to acknowledge its creator. There is currently no requirement that they do so.

“Proper attribution helps creators and performers build their reputation and incentivises creation of new works,” the report said. “This is especially important in the digital era, where works are easily misattributed or not attributed at all.”

It also proposes two exceptions designed to improve access to copyrighted materials for purposes that are of important public interest,

with the appropriate safeguards.

The first is to allow non-profit schools and their students to use free online resources for teaching purposes. Their existing exceptions generally cover only copying a portion of a work.

The report also suggested that a new exception be made for those who use automated techniques to analyse text, data and other content to generate insights. At present, those who do so risk infringing copyright as this typically requires large-scale copying of works without permission.

Allowing them to do so legally will “promote applications of data analytics and big data across a gamut of industries, unlocking new business opportunities, speeding up processes and reducing

costs for all,” MinLaw said.

The report was put together after a three-year review and two rounds of public consultation. The review was done in the light of the impact that technological and market changes in the digital age have on the creation, distribution and consumption of creative works.

The review suggests that a new class licensing scheme be set up for collective management organisations, which are unregulated today.

However, MinLaw and Ipos turned down proposals such as the one to establish a voluntary copyright registration system. Such a system would not be comprehensive and there are significant concerns that the registry would not be well used as it would cost money to register work, they said.

Both agencies said that on top of amending the Copyright Act to implement the report’s conclusions, they will also restructure the Act and revise the language used to make it more readable and understandable. The draft Bill will be made available for the public to comment on when it is ready.

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SEE TOP OF THE NEWS A6

## Unexpected 8.5% drop in S’pore exports

Singapore’s non-oil domestic exports (Nodx) took an unexpected dip in December, falling for a second consecutive month and ending 2018 on a weak note.

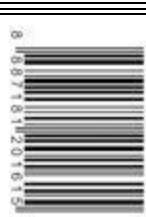
Nodx decreased by 8.5 per cent in December compared with a year ago, marking its worst performance since October 2016 – with declines in both electronic and non-electronic shipments.

The figure was well below predictions of a 2 per cent increase according to a Bloomberg poll, in part due to the high base of comparison, given the high exports in December 2017.

Shipments to most of Singapore’s top markets declined except to the United States and China, and economists noted the latest figures were in line with recent trade data disappointments out from other Asian countries.

SEE BUSINESS C1

## Britain in Brexit deadlock as May reaches out to rivals



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Britain was in a deadlock yesterday as it sought a new Brexit plan following the crushing defeat of Prime Minister Theresa May’s European Union withdrawal deal.

A day after she survived a no-confidence vote triggered by Parliament’s rejection of her Brexit deal, Mrs May yesterday asked party leaders to forget self-interest to find a solution.

But opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said yesterday that his party refused to talk unless Mrs May took a “no-deal” Brexit off the table, as he accused her of sending Britain towards a sudden exit on March 29 with no transition period.

Mrs May has refused to soften her Brexit position, fearing she would lose hardcore support from her Conservative party. Meanwhile, France yesterday stepped up contingency plans for a no-deal Brexit.

SEE TOP OF THE NEWS A8&10

## Candidates face off in Indonesia’s election debate



Taking centre stage at the first debate for Indonesia’s 2019 presidential election were General Elections Commission chairman Arief Budiman (centre) with (from far left) vice-presidential candidate Ma’ruf Amin and incumbent President Joko Widodo, along with their rivals Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Uno.

Mr Joko and his challenger Mr Prabowo yesterday offered big visions for the country during the debate that also saw them attacking each other and defending their own positions.

The debate was the first of five live sessions ahead of the April 17 presidential election. Both candidates came across as sure-footed and engaged.

And while pollster surveys showed that Mr Joko and his running mate Dr Ma’ruf are ahead, there is a big pool of undecided voters who could yet change the picture three months later. PHOTO: ANTARA

SEE WORLD A12&13



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# 10 must-reads for today

**1 Mix of faith and politics**  
The Kumbh Mela festival, one of Hinduism's biggest religious congregations, began on Tuesday with transgender ascetics being allowed to take part for the first time. Along with that historic milestone, the congregation has taken on a political overtone this year ahead of the parliamentary elections due in around three months. **WORLD A22**



Hindu holy men arriving to take a dip during the first grand bath of the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, India, on Tuesday. PHOTO: REUTERS

**2 Changes to Copyright Act**  
The Law Ministry and the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore released details of changes to the Copyright Act in a report which makes 15 proposals, put together after a three-year review and public consultations. Proposed changes include measures against the import and sale of certain set-top boxes. **TOP OF THE NEWS A1**

**3 Fair action for errant docs**  
A 16-member committee has been appointed by the Singapore Medical Council to help ensure errant doctors get fair and consistent disciplinary sentences. Headed by Judge of Appeal Judith Prakash, the committee includes members of the medical and legal fraternities and representatives from the Health and Law ministries. **TOP OF THE NEWS A4**

**4 Delay in Thai elections?**  
Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha has given one of the strongest indications that the Feb 24 election will be delayed yet again. But while protests have spilled out, analysts do not expect them to spin out of control. **WORLD A14**

**5 Chindia's last chance**  
Both India and China stand to gain from better ties, but efforts to do so are hobbled by a long-running border dispute. A military build-up is underway on both sides amid signs that India is shifting away from its non-aligned position on global politics, says associate editor Ravi Velloor. **OPINION A26**



**6 Woman found dead in flat**  
A 34-year-old man was arrested after a woman was found dead in a Housing Board flat on the 11th floor of Block 693D in Woodlands Avenue 6 yesterday. The man, who was believed to be in a relationship with the 41-year-old woman, is due to be charged with murder today. **HOME B3**

**7 Appeal to keep koi tank**  
The Tampines Town Council is working with a resident to address safety concerns over a koi tank he built on the doorsteps of his Housing Board flat. HDB had said on Tuesday that the tank had to be removed as it could "lead to injuries or fatalities", but Tampines GRC MP Baey Yam Keng said: "We are in the midst of putting up an appeal to keep the tank." **HOME B6**



ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM

**9 Taiwanese takes lead**  
Taiwanese golfer Hung Chien-yao (left) is the overnight leader of the SMBC Singapore Open, carding a five-under 66 on a rain-disrupted first day yesterday. Six players, including Filipino Miguel Tabuena, are a stroke behind in second place, with half of the 156-strong field returning at 7.30am today to finish their first rounds. Defending champion Sergio Garcia is tied-22nd on two-under. **SPORT C10**

**8 Few firms invest in workers**  
Only 12 per cent of companies are putting money into better training for their employees, according to the latest National Business Survey. The poll, which involved 705 local and foreign companies, also shows that employers' top challenge is hiring people with the right skills and attitude. **BUSINESS C2**

**10 State of Chinese fashion**  
China contributes more than 500 billion yuan (\$100 billion) in luxury spending – nearly a third of the global market. This begs the question: Why is the Chinese fashion scene still so weak? **LIFE D2**

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**VIDEO**  
**Hangout with ST**  
Multimedia journalists Alyssa Woo and Hairianto Diman discuss topics such as the #10YearChallenge and whether the koi tank built on the steps of a Housing Board flat can remain as it is. <http://str.sg/hangout47>



**PODCAST**  
**Life Picks**  
We select our favourite Chinese New Year cookies this year, check out Orchard Cafe at Orchard Hotel and recommend singer Yoyo Sham, who will be singing at the Esplanade on Feb 23. <http://str.sg/lifepicks18>

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## S'pore welcomes ideas that add to arts vibrancy, say 3 govt agencies

**Akshita Nanda**  
Arts Correspondent  
and Toh Wen Li

Three government agencies that backed an art fair, whose founder blamed competition for its sudden cancellation and at short notice, said yesterday that Singapore welcomes ideas and programmes which add vibrancy to the country's visual arts scene.

The National Arts Council (NAC), Economic Development Board (EDB) and Singapore Tourism Board (STB) made the point in a joint reply to Mr Lorenzo Rudolf of Art Stage Singapore, who had cited "unequal competition" from a Gillman Barracks fair.

Their statement said: "The Singapore Government has and will always welcome ideas and programmes including art fairs from all organisers, with an aim to add vibrancy to Singapore's visual arts landscape."

They added that support given to Art Stage Singapore "involved raising international awareness of Singapore's art offerings, growing a strong local and regional collector base and building local capability for art market development".

Mr Rudolf had cancelled the Art Stage fair nine days before its public opening on Jan 25 at the Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre.

In a media statement on Wednesday night to explain the cancellation, he said that all the participants in a Gillman Barracks fair are previous exhibitors of Art Stage who were lured by "low participation costs", among other things.

He was referring to S.E.A. Focus, a boutique art fair that is an initiative of STPI - Creative Workshop & Gallery. Featuring 26 galleries, it will be held from Jan 24 to 27.

Yesterday, Mr Rudolf said in an e-mail to The Straits Times that he wants to help the galleries left in the lurch by his cancellation.

Asked whether they would get their money back, he said he would "explore all short-, mid- and long-term possibilities of helping them and repairing their damage".



Mr Lorenzo Rudolf had cancelled the Art Stage fair nine days before its public opening on Jan 25, citing "unequal competition" from a Gillman Barracks fair. LIANHE ZAOBAO FILE PHOTO

He did not elaborate nor respond to queries on why he gave the galleries such short notice.

Mr Rudolf, a Swiss national who used to be director of Art Basel in the mid-1990s, is credited with taking Art Stage from a trade show to a top-tier international art event.

Introduced here in 2011, it is regarded as Singapore's main art fair.

In an open letter to collectors on Wednesday night, Mr Rudolf cited poor local sales and called the Gillman Barracks fair "a new obstacle".

When asked whether S.E.A. Focus was a rival, Ms Emi Eu, executive director of STPI - Creative Workshop & Gallery, said it was natural for the art fairs to happen at the same time.

"Art Central (in Hong Kong) is not going to hold their fair before or after Art Basel Hong Kong," she said, referring to the two major art fairs held annually in March.

"We want to give people the opportunity to go to different places. More offerings is better, especially if we want to attract buyers from outside... because Singapore is such a small market to start with."

She added: "We announced our S.E.A. Focus event in May (last year). We have always stated that we want to add more diversity and exciting offerings to Singapore Art Week, together with Art Stage."

Gallerists who spoke to The

Straits Times feel the market here is not big enough for so many art fairs.

Ms Vera Ong of Art-2 Gallery, with other local gallerists in the Art Galleries Association (Singapore), had helped start one of Asia's longest-running fairs - ARTSINGAPORE, which ran from 2000 to 2011. It was edged out by Art Stage Singapore's entry in 2011.

Ms Ong said: "We found the cake was so small. How many fairs can people take part in?"

Ms Lydie Blandeau of Visionairs gallery agreed. But she was hopeful that S.E.A. Focus "could be the start of something big".

The new fair is also backed by the NAC, EDB and STB. Its lead partner and sponsor is United Overseas Bank.

Ms Ong, who took part in Art Stage Singapore 2017, opted this year for a booth in S.E.A. Focus "because it is something new".

"It is always good to take part in something new. The response is good because everyone is curious," she said.

As for Art Stage Singapore, Ms Blandeau said that the brand is "finished in Singapore".

She added: "If Singapore wants to compete as an arts hub, it has to take care of its fairs."

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## Panel to develop guidelines on sentencing of errant doctors

**New 16-member committee appointed by SMC to help ensure penalties are fair and consistent**

**Linette Lai**

The Singapore Medical Council (SMC) has appointed a 16-member committee that will help ensure errant doctors get disciplinary sentences which are consistent and fair.

It said in a statement yesterday that the new Sentencing Guidelines Committee will develop a framework to guide disciplinary tribunals in meting out appropriate sanctions, "taking into account sentencing principles".

"The sentencing guidelines will help the disciplinary tribunals in ensuring consistency and fairness in the sentences meted out, and improve transparency and rigour in the disciplinary process," it said.

The SMC also said that in developing the guidelines, committee members will consider local jurisprudence on professional conduct and discipline, as well as the practices and approaches adopted by other jurisdictions. They will also set out the mitigating and aggravating factors - like a doctor's seniority - which a disciplinary tribunal can take into account when deciding on the appropriate sanction.

Currently, disciplinary tribunals look at penalties imposed in the past to decide whether a doctor should be fined, suspended or struck off the register. But in September 2017, a disciplinary tribunal called for clear sentencing guidelines to be drawn up to ensure penalties meted out are consistent.

Its chairman, Professor Walter Tan, said having clear guidelines

would also let doctors know, from the penalties, how severely certain actions are viewed.

The matter was also raised in a commentary by Straits Times senior health correspondent Salma Khalik, in which she said such guidelines are "long overdue". She cited two separate cases in which doctors were found guilty of harming the patient and falsifying records. One doctor was fined \$10,000; another was fined the same amount and suspended for nine months.

"Doctors are not judges, and although they rightly sit in judgment over their peers who have erred, adjudicating over such matters is not their area of expertise," she wrote.

The new committee is headed by Judge of Appeal Judith Prakash.

It includes members of the medical and legal fraternities, as well as representatives from the Health and Law ministries. All members were appointed by the SMC in consultation with both ministries.

"The members possess the necessary breadth and depth of subject matter knowledge and expertise, as well as legal expertise, to facilitate a thorough and considered review of the disciplinary process to propose a set of sentencing guidelines," the SMC said.

Ms Joan Pereira, a member of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Health, said giving disciplinary tribunals clear guidelines to work with "will remove uncertainty and reduce elements of subjective judgment" and result in a more transparent enforcement framework.

"Eventually, this should also help to improve the standards of health-care delivery and better deter disciplinary infringements," she said.

The committee aims to develop the guidelines by the end of the year.

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## Hawkers get faster access to funds from Nets transactions

**Timothy Goh and Toh Ting Wei**

In a move to address hawkers' grouches about e-payment delays, Nets yesterday said proceeds from Nets transactions made before 5pm will now land in hawkers' bank accounts by 11pm the same day.

Proceeds from transactions made after 5pm will be credited to the hawkers' bank accounts before 9am the next day.

The firm said the initiative, which was launched yesterday, will improve cash flow and give hawkers faster access to their funds.

To be eligible for this new system, hawkers must have a DBS, OCBC or United Overseas Bank account.

CashCard and Nets FlashPay transactions are not applicable for same-day settlements.

Hawkers told The Straits Times that the new system is an improvement over the previous one, where they were able to get proceeds only on the next working day.

This meant that hawkers who registered Nets transactions on a Friday had to wait until after the weekend before they were able to receive the proceeds.

Ms Chelvie Magan, 37, co-owner of the Seyon Briyani Palace in Toa Payoh, told The Straits Times that the new initiative addresses her concern about having to wait for sales proceeds.

She has used Nets' payment system for about six months, with about 20 per cent of her income coming through it.

"It is easier for us to cover our expenses with the money coming in on the same day," she said.

"It will help me to promptly pay my staff at the end of the day."

More than 4,000 stalls across hawker centres, coffee shops and canteens accept payment via Nets.

The new initiative was the result of a collaboration between Nets and DBS, OCBC and UOB.

Nets said in a statement that it hopes the move will encourage more hawkers to adopt e-payments.

Hawkers do not need to make any extra arrangements to qualify for the same-day settlement.



A customer trying out QR code payment at the Geylang Serai Market and Food Centre last September. Under Nets' new initiative, funds from Nets transactions made before 5pm will now be credited to hawkers' bank accounts by 11pm the same day, and proceeds from transactions after 5pm will be credited by 9am the next day. ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM

>4,000

Number of stalls across hawker centres, coffee shops and canteens that accept payment via Nets.

But for some hawkers, the change makes no difference.

Mr Kelvin Lee, 39, owner of Kim Keat Hokkien Mee, accepts only cash at his stall. He said in Mandarin: "Throughout the day, we have suppliers coming in at different timings."

"We pay them in cash, so we need the cash on hand at all times."

He added: "Transacting in cash is faster too. There is no need to wait for the machine to load and for people to take out their phones or key

in their PIN numbers."

Mr Lim Giam Sock, 70, owner of drinks stall Sin Heng Coffeeshop, said that while he accepts payment by Nets, most customers still prefer to pay in cash due to the small amounts spent.

He sometimes records only one Nets transaction every two days.

Nets' latest announcement comes amid a nationwide push towards cashless payment.

Last September, the firm was ap-

pointed to unify the fragmented e-payment landscape here and bring cashless payments to all 12,000 stalls at hawker centres, canteens and coffee shops in Singapore.

Merchants will be given a terminal for card payments and the national QR code payment standard, dubbed SGQR, to accept and process transactions from about 20 payment schemes, such as Singtel Dash, GrabPay and Alipay.

The terminal will be rented to

hawkers at no charge for the first three years after they sign up with Nets. Transaction fees of 0.5 per cent will be borne by the Government during the period.

By August, customers dining at coffee shops, hawker centres and industrial canteens can choose from the payment schemes through unified touchpoints.

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# New laws planned to ban sale of media boxes with add-on services

Clarity over boxes that aid access to pirated content comes after review of copyright laws

**Irene Tham**  
Senior Tech Correspondent

New laws will be tabled in Parliament some time this year to ban the sale of media streaming boxes with “add-on” services that help consumers to access pirated content.

This clarity comes on the heels of a three-year review by the Ministry of Law (MinLaw) and the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (Ipos) of Singapore’s copyright laws.

The legality of media streaming boxes has been a grey and contentious area as copyright holders have found it difficult to resort to many of the usual legal avenues created in the DVD era against set-top box retailers that benefit from the sale of add-on services.

“We are of the view that legislative amendments are needed to both clarify our policy position and the actions that can be taken against retailers of such set-top boxes,” Min-

Law said in its Copyright Review Report issued yesterday.

“The measures, which are absent today, will make clear that acts such as the import and sale of such devices are prohibited,” the ministry said in a separate statement.

The review involved two public consultations, three town hall meetings and 10 engagement sessions conducted since August 2016.

Feedback from various stakeholders – including consumers, industry and trade associations, businesses, intellectual property practitioners and academics – was sought.

Close to 100 formal submissions and more than 280 online feedback forms were received by MinLaw and Ipos.

The new laws will impose civil and criminal liability on people who wilfully distribute or sell a product that can be used to access pirated content if the product is designed for such access or advertised as such.

The selling of a generic device with add-on services – such as supplying website links or subscription services to pirated content – will also be deemed illegal.

But the laws will not require retailers of general devices to be responsible for how purchasers set up the devices and use them.

Technology lawyer Koh Chia Ling of OC Queen Street said that consumers are not the target of the proposed changes.

“If streaming involves the making of an infringing copy by the consumer, then the consumer infringes copyright. However, it is not clear whether streaming involves making a copy at all times or at all,” he said.

The Copyright Act was enacted in 1987, with major revisions last made in 2014 to allow content owners to seek a High Court order to get Internet service providers (ISPs) to block piracy websites. Before the revised law, they could not compel

**The new laws will impose civil and criminal liability on people who wilfully distribute or sell a product that can be used to access pirated content if the product is designed for such access or advertised as such. The selling of a generic device with add-on services – such as supplying website links or subscription services to pirated content – will also be deemed illegal.**

ISPs to block pirated content.

Last November, following a motion filed by SingNet, which is part of Singtel, and copyright holders Fox Networks Group Singapore, NGC Network Asia, Fox International Channels (US) and The Football Association Premier League, the High Court ordered eight new piracy websites and any others related to them to be blocked, bringing the total number of such websites blocked to just over 60.

In April, the courts will hear a criminal case against trading firm An-Nahl for “wilfully” infringing copyright, including that of telcos StarHub and Singtel, as well as the Premier League, by helping people to access pirated content using media streaming boxes that it was selling.

A date to hear the case against retail firm Synnex Trading over a similar infringement has yet to be fixed.

itham@sph.com.sg



Android TV boxes for sale at Sim Lim Square. The legality of media streaming boxes has been a contentious area as copyright holders have found it difficult to resort to many of the usual legal avenues created in the DVD era against set-top box retailers that benefit from the sale of add-on services. ST PHOTO: JASMINE CHOONG

# Singapore SMEs taking risk of cyber attacks too lightly: Experts

Even after SingHealth’s high-profile data breach last year, many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Singapore are taking the risk of cyber attacks too lightly, warn experts.

The indifference is all the more striking as three in five SMEs said they had suffered cyber-security breaches that resulted in business disruptions and data leaks over a 12-month period.

According to insurer Chubb’s survey of 300 SMEs, only 30 per cent of those affected notified customers or employees about the data leaks.

More than three in five polled said they believe that large corporations are more at risk of cyber attacks than SMEs.

“They think they are too small to fail,” said Mr Andrew Taylor, Chubb Asia-Pacific’s cyber underwriting manager.

But the opposite is true, he added. “In fact, smaller companies

have a relatively larger exposure as they face the same threats as larger businesses but do not have the means to implement comprehensive protection, leaving significant risk uncovered.”

The poll of SMEs with fewer than 200 workers was conducted in August and September last year after news broke of Singapore’s worst data breach involving the personal details of 1.5 million SingHealth patients, including those of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

Earlier this week, SingHealth and its IT vendor Integrated Health Information Systems received the largest combined fine of \$1 million by the Personal Data Protection Commission (PDPC) for failing to protect patient data.

According to the Chubb survey, the system and data breaches experienced by those polled were mainly due to system breakdowns and human error, including the loss of portable storage devices.

**SMALLER FIRMS VULNERABLE**

**They think they are too small to fail... In fact, smaller companies have a relatively larger exposure as they face the same threats as larger businesses but do not have the means to implement comprehensive protection, leaving significant risk uncovered.**

**MR ANDREW TAYLOR**, Chubb Asia-Pacific’s cyber underwriting manager.

ity is seen largely as an IT issue in their organisations.

Half of all the companies polled said key staff may not be fully aware of their obligations to protect the data they have access to, and there is no consistent understanding of what constitutes a cyber-security risk.

Technology and data privacy lawyer Bryan Tan of Pinsent Masons MPillay said SMEs must stop collecting any personal data they do not need. “The less you collect, the lower your risk exposure,” he said.

A new requirement will be tabled in Parliament this year requiring organisations to report breaches to the PDPC. The revised Personal Data Protection Act will also require individuals affected by a breach to be notified.

Organisations found guilty of being tardy in reporting can be fined up to \$1 million.

“It will take the guesswork out of whether to report breaches,” said Mr Tan.

Technology lawyer Jonathan Kok of RHTLaw Taylor Wessing said, however, that the PDPC could do some policing and random audits.

“If SMEs think they will not be caught, they will not bother to report breaches,” he said.

Irene Tham

## Cyber incidents reported over a 12-month period in a survey of SMEs

Incidents	%
Business interruption from system malfunction, technical fault	22
Business interruption due to reliance on a third-party service provider that has suffered downtime	20
Business interruption or data loss through human error, such as a lost or stolen memory device or employees unintentionally exposing their company data to risk	20
Data loss through system malfunction, technical fault	16
Malicious parties disrupting operations	9
Competitors stealing your Intellectual Property (IP), R&D or other proprietary information	8
Disgruntled employees or other malicious parties leaking compromising company e-mails or other files	8
Hackers/cyber criminals stealing or compromising customer records	8
A supplier or business partner losing your data or causing it to be compromised	7
Cyber criminals defrauding your business	6
Cyber criminals compounding critical operational data and holding it to ransom	6
State-sponsored agencies stealing your IP, R&D or other proprietary information	5
Don't know	3
Other notable cyber incidents or breaches	2

Source: CHUBB SINGAPORE SME CYBER PREPAREDNESS REPORT STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

# Goldman CEO apologises to Malaysia over ex-banker’s role in IMDB scandal

NEW YORK • Goldman Sachs chief executive officer David Solomon has apologised to the Malaysian people for the role that a senior banker at the firm, Tim Leissner, played in the IMDB scandal.

Malaysia was “defrauded by many individuals”, Mr Solomon said in a conference call with analysts after the investment bank reported fourth-quarter earnings on Wednesday. Leissner “was one of those people”.

“It is very clear that the people of Malaysia were defrauded by many individuals, including the highest members of the prior government,” Mr Solomon said.

Malaysia has filed criminal charges against the Wall Street firm over a relationship that spawned one of the biggest scandals in the country’s history.

Singapore expanded a criminal probe into fund flows linked to Malaysia Development Berhad (IMDB) to include Goldman Sachs, and is coordinating closely with the United States Justice Department, people with knowledge of the matter said last month.

The Singapore authorities are trying to determine whether some of the roughly US\$600 million (S\$814 million) in fees from the three bond deals Goldman arranged for IMDB from 2012 to 2013 flowed to the Singapore subsidiary, the people said.

Mr Solomon reiterated that the firm conducted considerable due diligence on the deals and was lied to by Leissner, who pleaded guilty last year to charges including conspiring to launder money. Appearing on his first earnings call since becoming CEO last October, Mr



**Goldman Sachs CEO David Solomon said the firm conducted considerable due diligence on the bond deals for IMDB.**

Solomon said the firm is cooperating with the Justice Department, and the investigation is still open.

Malaysia alleges that Goldman misled investors in the three bond sales it arranged for IMDB while knowing the money raised would be misappropriated.

Goldman has said it will vigorously defend against the charges. The bond sales were arranged by Goldman Sachs International, a London-based unit.

That division, along with the Sin-

gapore entity, was among three units named in Malaysia’s criminal charges against the company, which seek fines in excess of the US\$2.7 billion of funds allegedly misappropriated and US\$600 million of fees Goldman reaped.

US prosecutors say that more than US\$4.5 billion flowed from IMDB, through a complex web of opaque transactions and fraudulent shell companies, to finance spending sprees by corrupt officials and their associates.

Leissner, who oversaw the relationship with IMDB, is in the US.

His former deputy Roger Ng was arrested last November in Malaysia and is fighting extradition to the US. He has also pleaded not guilty to the charges that the Malaysian authorities levelled against him.

Meanwhile, former prime minis-

ter Najib Razak said yesterday that Goldman should take responsibility if it failed to take care of the interests of IMDB, according to the Malaysiakini news site.

“We put up a system and it was there to take care of our interests,” Najib told reporters in Pahang state. “So, if they failed, then they have to take responsibility because they were appointed and paid by IMDB to take care of our interests.”

Najib was Malaysia’s finance minister and headed the advisory board of IMDB, which is a unit under the Finance Ministry.

The IMDB scandal erupted into public view in 2015, and led to last year’s electoral defeat of Najib, ending his near decade-long stint as premier. It also spelt the downfall of Umno, the party that had led every government since Malaysia

emerged from colonial rule.

Malaysian investigations into IMDB were relaunched by the new government led by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, and Najib is facing multiple charges for financial crimes, though he has consistently denied any wrongdoing.

Meanwhile, The New York Times reported that in recent presentations to US regulators and the law enforcement authorities, according to people familiar with their contents, Goldman executives and their lawyers have depicted Leissner as a master conman.

The tactics, especially against someone who had been a star banker, reflect just how worried Goldman is about the criminal investigations into its role in the theft of at least US\$2.7 billion from IMDB. BLOOMBERG, REUTERS





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# UK deadlock continues amid competing visions for Brexit

**May urges party leaders to find solution, but both sides show little sign of budging on demands**

LONDON • Britain's last-minute scramble to shape its exit from the European Union, its biggest policy upheaval in half a century, hit the rocks yesterday as Prime Minister Theresa May and opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn dug in their heels for competing visions.

Meanwhile, in France, the government activated its plans for handling the effects of a no-deal Brexit, which Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said had become "less and less unlikely".

After Mrs May's two-year attempt to forge an amicable divorce with an independent trade policy was crushed by Parliament in the biggest defeat for a British leader in modern political history, she asked party leaders yesterday to forget self-interest to find a solution. Her demand came a day after she survived a no-confidence vote sparked by the crushing defeat of her Brexit deal.

Yet, there was little sign yesterday that either of the two major parties – which together hold 88 per cent of the 650 seats in Parliament – was prepared to budge on key demands.

Mr Corbyn said Mrs May had sent

Britain hurtling towards the cliff edge of a sudden exit on March 29 with no transition period, and urged her to ditch her "red lines". But he repeated his own condition for talks: A pledge to block a no-deal Brexit.

"The government confirmed that she would not take 'no-deal' off the table," Mr Corbyn said in a speech in the English town of Hastings.

"So, I say to the Prime Minister

again: I am quite happy to talk, but the starting point for any talks about Brexit must be that the threat of a disastrous no-deal outcome is ruled out."

But the further Mrs May moves towards softening Brexit, the more she alienates dedicated Brexit supporters in her own Conservative party, who think the threat of a no-deal exit is a crucial bargaining chip

and should anyway not be feared.

If Mrs May fails to forge consensus, the world's fifth-largest economy will drop out of the EU on March 29 without a deal or will be forced to delay Brexit, possibly holding a national election or even another referendum.

Mr Corbyn said that, under certain conditions, he would look at options including another referendum.



British Prime Minister Theresa May listening as Environment Secretary Michael Gove spoke during a debate on a no-confidence motion in the House of Commons on Wednesday. Mrs May, who survived the vote, will on Monday put forward a motion in Parliament on her proposed next steps on Brexit. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Mrs May has refused to countenance another election, having lost her parliamentary majority in a snap poll in 2017 that left her reliant on the support of a small Northern Irish pro-Brexit party.

She has repeatedly said another referendum would corrode faith in democracy among the 17.4 million people who voted to leave the EU in 2016. "I believe it is my duty to deliver on the British people's instruction to leave the European Union. And I intend to do so," she said in a televised address.

Other members of the EU yesterday offered to talk.

"We will do everything we can so that Britain exits with, and not without, an agreement," German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas told Berlin's Lower House of Parliament.

In France, Mr Philippe said his country would provide for €50 million (\$577 million) worth of investment in French ports and airports, which he said would be most affected by the changes needed in the event of Britain crashing out of the EU without a deal.

But they can do little until London decides what it wants.

British politicians have failed to find agreement on how or even whether to leave the EU. If there is a solution, it may be for Parliament's backbenchers to find it.

Mrs May will, on Monday, put forward a motion in Parliament on her proposed next steps. Over the following week, lawmakers will be able to propose alternatives.

On Jan 29, they will debate these plans, and voting on them should indicate whether any of them could get majority support. If a way forward emerges, Mrs May could then go back to the EU and seek changes to her deal. Parliament would still need to vote on any new agreement.

REUTERS, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SEE EDITORIAL A26, OPINION A29



Protesters outside the Houses of Parliament in London on Wednesday, after Mrs May's Brexit deal was crushed by Parliament in the biggest defeat for a British leader in modern political history. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

## Radical rethink of red lines needed, EU tells PM May

LONDON • The scale of British Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit defeat has convinced the European Union to demand that she radically rethink Britain's red lines, as the bloc signalled its willingness to delay the country's withdrawal by many months.

The EU had been preparing to make limited concessions over the much-loathed Irish border backstop to help Mrs May convince Parliament to back her deal.

But the 230-vote loss on Tuesday night changed that: European governments now believe a more fundamental shift is needed and the move has to come from the British side, three diplomats said.

It adds to growing evidence that Brexit is unlikely to happen on the long-scheduled date of March 29, with European governments willing to delay Britain's departure well into the second half of the year, according to diplomats who spoke on condition of anonymity.

But they told Mrs May that she

needs to enter into credible cross-party discussions to ensure there is a unified British position on Brexit, then present the EU with a road map for the way forward.

EU diplomats say the next step could be to reopen the political declaration – the part of the agreement dealing with future relations – to make it clearer that ties will remain close after the split.

That could include signing up permanently to a Customs union with the EU, which has been one of Mrs

**While many EU officials expect Mrs May to ask for an extension to the exit day, European governments still disagree over whether it should be allowed – and how long it should last.**

May's red lines but is the policy of the opposition Labour Party.

It would remove the need for many elements of the backstop, which is designed to avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland, which is part of the EU. The issue is a contentious one for pro-Brexit lawmakers because while it ensures that goods flow freely across the Irish border after Brexit, it would keep Britain tied to many European rules until an agreement on a detailed trade deal.

Opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn yesterday urged Mrs May to blur those red lines, saying he was open to a compromise.

While many EU officials expect Mrs May to ask for an extension to the exit day, European governments still disagree over whether it should be allowed – and how long it should last.

Some believe their vision for getting the deal passed can still be achieved over the next 10 weeks; others think an extension is needed that could stretch Britain's membership well into the second half of this year.

Mrs May told Parliament on Wednesday that the plan was still to leave on March 29, but left the door open to an extension. A spokesman for the European Commission said yesterday it had not received Britain's request for an extension. BLOOMBERG, REUTERS, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

## Wealthy Europeans call in the movers as no-deal split looms

LONDON • With the Brexit deadline less than 75 days away, the increasing likelihood of a no-deal split is pushing wealthy Europeans who have made their homes in Britain to call it a day and get the movers in.

Mr Anthony Ward Thomas, founder of a firm of the same name that specialises in overseas relocation, dealt with 296 moves away from Britain last year, an 82 per cent rise. Favoured destinations include Paris, Brussels, Zurich and Geneva, as well as southern France and Spanish locations like Majorca.

The timing suggests a reaction not so much to Brexit itself, but the handling of negotiations, Mr Ward Thomas said. Customers are typically wealthy, having at least £5 million (\$58.7 million) at their disposal, and mostly European Union citizens moving with their families, including retirees seeking warmer weather but also favouring more stable political systems.

"I wouldn't say it is because of Brexit with a capital 'b', but the fact

that we find ourselves in such a mess," he said in a phone interview. "People are leaving the ship because the ship itself is foundering."

The exodus may accelerate after the rejection of Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit deal. With no end to the saga in sight, people "who have been sitting on their hands" may now be moved to make some life-changing decisions, he said.

Popular destinations also include United Kingdom crown dependencies in the Channel Islands, which do not apply capital gains or inheritance tax. Relocation inquiries increased by more than 50 per cent in the second half of last year compared with the first six months, according to Ms Jo Stoddart, director of Locate Guernsey.

Italy has also emerged as a magnet for moves, spurred by Brexit and the introduction of a new tax regime two years ago, said Mr Francesco Tesi, senior associate adviser of Lionard Luxury Real Estate. The country was previously a

focus mainly for second-home owners. "Now, it is a hedge-fund manager or an entrepreneur," he said.

Mr Ward Thomas has not yet seen an uptick in corporate relocations. Though with many companies saying a non-negotiated exit would be disastrous for their UK operations, he said some are laying the groundwork for moves.

A continued flight of EU nationals would bring a boost for the industry after three years of lacklustre growth, which the British Association of Removers said has been a consequence of people awaiting the outcome of Brexit. To be sure, the most recent official figures, for the quarter to June, still show a net inflow of migrants to Britain from the EU, though the gap has shrunk to the narrowest in six years.

Brexit has also been blamed for a downturn in London property values, though that could dissuade some home owners from leaving, as people who put their houses on the market face the lowest chances of securing a sale in 10 years.

Mr Ward Thomas, though, said continuing uncertainty around Brexit could further boost demand by increasing the chances of the Labour Party coming to power, with its pledges to redistribute wealth. The "prospects of a (Jeremy) Corbyn government", he said, is fuelling "a desire to realise the value of assets in the UK and move to a new tax domain". BLOOMBERG





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# Crisis after crisis, May just plods on

Despite defeat over Brexit deal, PM May pulls through again, surviving leadership challenge

LONDON • It is Wednesday morning. Mrs Theresa May's career is over, as a glance at the morning papers will confirm.

Her Brexit deal, the product of 2½ years of agonising negotiation, has been rejected by a margin of 230 votes, in the worst defeat in British political history.

"No deal... No hope... No clue... No confidence," declares the Mirror. The Sun edits her photo onto the body of a dodo.

Now, it is Wednesday afternoon. Hey! She is back!

The Labour Party is making a bid to dissolve the government. Leaping to Mrs May's defence like gallant knights are fellow Tories, among them many who have spent the last few months plotting to remove her.

"She personifies duty, she is a patriot and a servant of our country," said one. Another said she "might even be remembered as the greatest PM we have had, even now". This is the bizarre world that is British politics, a Groundhog Day in which Mrs May awakes every day to discover herself in a dire political crisis, and every day survives, in her grim, implacable way.

The rallying of Tories against Labour's bid to bring down the government, which was defeated by a margin of 19 votes, did it again, the thing that had seemed impossible: It put wind into her sails.

"She is indestructible," wrote the Independent sketch writer Tom Peck, reflecting on the events of the day. "She is the cockroach in nuclear winter. She is the algae that survives on sulphuric gas from sub-aquatic volcanoes, seven miles beneath the daylight. She is the Nokia 5210."

Mrs May rarely gives any sense of being chastened by a defeat, plodding on in the manner that earned her the nickname "Maybot".

Scottish Labour lawmaker Stewart McDonald grilled her on Wednesday for signs that she was ready to reconsider her Brexit strategy. She did not comply, responding with a set of now-familiar, automatic phrases, like "deliver Brexit for the British people", which sent Mr McDonald into a spasm of frustration.

"I am trying to be helpful to the Prime Minister, believe it or not, but this is pure robotic fantasy," Mr McDonald said. He grumbled about it later on Twitter, writing: "I tried. But



British Prime Minister Theresa May speaking outside 10 Downing Street after she survived a no-confidence vote on Wednesday. Her Brexit deal, the product of 2½ years of negotiation, was rejected by a margin of 230 votes. PHOTO: REUTERS

A SURVIVOR

**She is indestructible. She is the cockroach in nuclear winter. She is the algae that survives on sulphuric gas from sub-aquatic volcanoes, seven miles beneath the daylight. She is the Nokia 5210.**



THE INDEPENDENT'S SKETCH WRITER  
TOM PECK, on Prime Minister Theresa May.

alas, the robot within the PM kicked in and she stuck to her script."

The day provided a number of surreal moments that tested the nation's storied capacity for calm.

At one point, Parliament broke away from the non-stop constitutional brush fire surrounding Brexit – The Guardian chose to augment its masthead on Wednesday with a reproduction of Edvard Munch's The Scream – to address an obscure motion banning the excessively low positioning of letter boxes.

Postal workers complain that low letter boxes can cause back pain or even, occasionally, hand injuries, explained lawmaker Vicky Ford, who noted with admiration that several European countries also regulate the size of letter box "apertures". "I hope this will be a moment of unity in British politics," she said brightly.

Ten minutes, and it was back to the meltdown of British democracy.

As Conservative lawmakers lined up to express their loyalty to Mrs May, BBC chief political correspondent Vicki Young marvelled at their pivot from the day before, when many among them were gleefully plotting to sink her hard-won deal.

Their circling of the wagons, she concluded, was "tribal". "It feels like a parallel universe, doesn't it, considering where we were last night, just 24 hours ago," she said. "I have to say, looking at the scenes in the last half-hour or so, it is the most united the Conservative benches have been, probably, for months."

A notable tribute to Mrs May came from Conservative lawmaker Mark

Francois, a leader of arch-Brexiteer European Research Group (ERG).

In November, he submitted a scathing letter to the party's 1922 committee, which has the power to remove the party leader, calling for the removal of Mrs May, who he said "just doesn't listen" and is "in complete denial". He has missed no opportunity to criticise her deal, which he described as "rancid", and complained that, instead of submitting the deal to a vote, members of her government had "gone and run away and hidden in the toilet".

On Wednesday, Mr Francois stood in her defence, acknowledging, to widespread laughter, that "she and I have not seen entirely eye to eye in the past". "But I am a Conservative first and last, and I know opportunism when I see it," he said. "I can tell you, when the bells ring, the whole of the ERG will walk through the lobbies with her, to vote this nonsense down."

The failed challenge to Mrs May's leadership came at just the right time, drawing attention away from the dismal failure of her Bill, said former Downing Street employee Nikki da Costa, now senior counsel for consulting firm Cicero Group. "Without a doubt, it is a wonderful distraction," she said. "It moves the news story forward very, very quickly."

It does not, however, resolve the matter at hand.

On the heels of her crushing defeat on Tuesday, Mrs May vowed to forge a deal that could win passage, but declined to offer specifics.

There is speculation she could seek a postponement of the March 29 deadline and agree to keep a permanent Customs union with the European bloc. She said on Wednesday that she would invite opposition party leaders to discuss a compromise, but Mr Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the opposing Labour Party, asked her to first rule out leaving the European Union without any agreement.

Mrs May's survival may provide ballast as this process moves forward, Ms da Costa said. When historians relate the story of Brexit, she said, they may not even recall Tuesday's epic defeat as the most important event of the week.

"As the years go by, and the 24-hour news cycle passes, it will be interesting to know which bits stand in the memory," she said. "Certainly the numbers for her defeat were very, very big yesterday. The fact that she is still standing suggests a strange form of stability." NYTIMES

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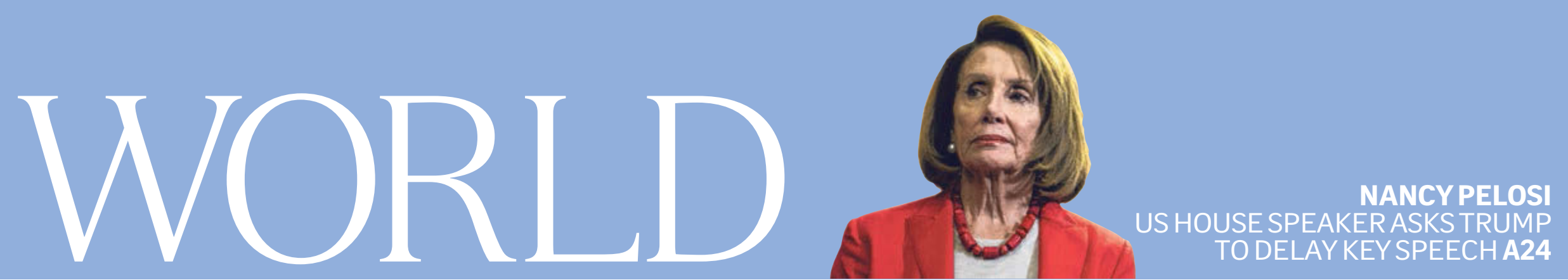
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Incumbent President Joko Widodo and his running mate Ma'ruf Amin (left) exchanged verbal punches with challengers Prabowo Subianto and his running mate Sandiaga Uno – during the televised debate yesterday, which was broadcast live by 18 television and radio stations across Indonesia. The topics covered were on the hot-button issues of corruption, terrorism, human rights and the law. PHOTOS: EPA-EFE, REUTERS

# Claims and rebuttals rule as Jokowi debates Prabowo

They go for each other's record in battle to win pool of swing voters

Wahyudi Soeriaatmadja  
Indonesia Correspondent  
In Jakarta

Indonesian President Joko Widodo and his challenger Prabowo Subianto yesterday squared off in a live debate ahead of the April 17 presidential election, monitored by tens of millions of people on television, radio and through livestreams on the Internet.

They attacked each other's record in the first of five live debates, with both men keen to capture the big pool of swing voters. The debate was broadcast live by 18 television and radio stations.

The topics covered were on the hot-button issues of corruption, terrorism, human rights and the law.

Mr Prabowo, 67, a retired army general, is running with businessman-turned-politician Sandiaga Uno, 49, who last year left his post as Jakarta deputy governor after less than a year in office.

They are the only rivals in a two-way race in the April presidential polls against Mr Joko, 57, and running mate Ma'ruf Amin, 75, a former leader of the 80 million-strong Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Islamic organisation.

Both Dr Ma'ruf and Mr Sandiaga, standing beside the presidential candidates, chipped in with some of the answers.

Yesterday's debate was held as the latest surveys by six pollsters, conducted between November and January, revealed that should the election be held during those periods, the Joko-Ma'ruf pair would garner between 47.7 per cent and 54.9 per cent of the votes.

### TWO VISIONS

**Jokowi:** Our vision is a developed Indonesia. We do not just offer civil and political rights but economic and socio-cultural rights, which we believe will lead to the fulfilment of human rights.

**Prabowo:** Our vision is a triumphant Indonesia. Legal institutions, like those for judges, prosecutors and police, have to be strong. We need to have enough money to pay our law enforcement so that they are not susceptible to graft. Source: Jakarta Post Twitter

And the Prabowo-Sandiaga pair would get between 30.6 per cent and 35.5 per cent.

But there is also a big chunk of undecided voters – between 10.6 per cent and 16.8 per cent – that is being targeted by both sides.

The live debates thus allow the candidates to deliver their message to the nearly 193 million voters in the world's largest archipelago of 17,000 islands.

Mr Joko is backed by the ruling Indonesian Democratic Party - Struggle (PDI-P) and eight other parties.

These include Golkar, among the country's oldest parties, and two Islamic-leaning factions, United Development Party (PPP) and National Awakening Party (PKB).

Mr Prabowo is running on the ticket of his party Gerindra and two Islamic-leaning parties, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and Na-

tional Mandate Party (PAN), along with former-president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's nationalist Democratic Party.

Some of the issues debated yesterday cut deep into what a section of Indonesians felt.

Mr Prabowo attacked Mr Joko for what he claimed was a discriminatory approach in enforcing the law, which is biased against the poor.

"You have ruled more than four years. People have experienced being discriminated against. You are the chief law enforcement officer. You must not discriminate based on religion, ethnics, or anything," Mr Prabowo said.

He also argued that Indonesia needs to ensure state apparatus with enormous legal authority like judges and policemen must be well paid so they have good quality of life and could resist bribes.

Mr Joko replied that the accusations about the law were baseless as the country operates on standard legal procedure and follows due process.

"Don't make baseless accusations. If anyone has evidence, they can report to the law enforcement officers," Mr Joko said.

The two candidates also spoke on the issue of corruption in politics and the civil service.

However, the inquiry into the 2017 attack on anti-graft investigator Novel Baswedan did not feature in the debate even though Mr Joko had said on Wednesday that he would give an update on the police probe.

Failure to solve the case remains a blemish on the President's record against corruption, and many had hoped he would elaborate on the police investigations during the debate last night.

wahyudis@sph.com.sg

## DEBATE SNAPSOTS

From the salaries of civil servants to the presence of women in positions of power, the first debate for the presidential election was a varied affair. Questions on corruption and bias drew the night's most spirited exchanges between incumbent Joko Widodo and his challenger Prabowo Subianto. The Straits Times highlights two of these.

### 1 COME FORWARD WITH EVIDENCE

The debate turned feisty when Mr Joko took a swipe at one of his opponent's former campaigners, who last year lied about being assaulted to cover up her plastic surgery.

Mr Prabowo said there was sentiment on the ground about state apparatus being biased, and charged that some village heads in East Java were detained after declaring their support for him.

"That's also unfair because stating an opinion is protected by basic laws," he said.

Mr Joko – to raucous cheers from his supporters – responded: "Don't make such accusations, Pak Prabowo. We are a country of laws. There are legal procedures, there are legal mechanisms."

If there is evidence, come forward, he urged. "For example, the face of one of his supporters was bruised. She said she was assaulted, held a press conference. It turns out it was from plastic surgery," said Mr Joko.

He was referring to anti-government activist Ratna Sarumpaet, who resigned from Mr Prabowo's campaign team after police investigations found that she had lied.

"If there is evidence, go through the legal mechanisms, make a report. Why must we throw accusations?"



Anti-government activist Ratna Sarumpaet was found to have lied about being assaulted to cover up her plastic surgery.

### 2 'I WILL PUT THEM IN JAIL MYSELF'

Mr Joko took aim at Mr Prabowo's Gerindra Party, noting that, according to Indonesia Corruption Watch, some of the party's candidates were former graft convicts.

Mr Prabowo, the party's chairman, responded: "I think that this is a democracy. I think that (the convicts) have gone through the legal process, and the graft they have committed is also not too large. It is those who have stolen trillions of rupiah that we should go after."

He added: "I guarantee that the Gerindra Party will fight corruption to its roots. If there are corrupt Gerindra members, I will put them in jail myself."

Nur Asyiqin Mohamad Salleh

## Anti-graft fight work in progress

JAKARTA • Indonesia's top anti-graft investigator Novel Baswedan was leading a probe into a major electronic identity card graft case when his face was splashed with acid in April 2017.

Two men on a motorcycle carried out the attack as he was leaving a mosque near his home in Jakarta.

The hit has left Mr Novel, the cousin of Jakarta governor Anies Baswedan, partially blind despite intensive treatment at Singapore's Mount Elizabeth Hospital.

The failure of the police to find the perpetrators of the shocking attack after nearly two years is a rare, but significant, blemish on President

Joko Widodo's record against corruption.

Last week, bomb devices were found at the homes of two senior officials from the Corruption Eradication Commission, the agency that Mr Novel works for.

One official had a molotov cocktail thrown at his house, while a de-



The 2017 acid attack on Indonesia's top graft buster Novel Baswedan remains unsolved.

vice resembling a pipe bomb was found at the other official's gate.

Eradicating corruption remains an uphill battle in Indonesia, where Parliament was considered to be

the most corrupt institution in a 2017 survey by Transparency International Indonesia.

The case Mr Novel was working on had caused 2.3 trillion rupiah (\$219 million) in state losses, and implicated many MPs, including former parliamentary Speaker Setya Novanto, and other high-ranking officials, including a police general.

Setya was found guilty and sentenced to 15 years' jail last April.

The battle against rampant corruption in Indonesia has slowed

down, according to the annual Corruption Perception Index (CPI) released by Berlin-based Transparency International.

Indonesia was at the 88th position out of 168 countries surveyed in the 2015 CPI. Countries perceived as less corrupt are in the top positions. Indonesia slipped to 96th out of 180 countries surveyed in the 2017 CPI, down by six places from the 2016 CPI.

Linda Yulisman



News analysis

Many pertinent issues raised but details lacking



**Francis Chan**  
Indonesia Bureau Chief  
In Jakarta

The hype leading up to last night's inaugural presidential debate for Indonesia's upcoming elections was high, and the candidates mostly did not disappoint as they faced off on live television for more than two hours.

The incumbent, President Joko Widodo, and the man seeking to take his place, Prabowo Subianto, seemed well prepared, but more importantly authentic, as they engaged in a competition of ideas.

The two were mostly evenly matched as they tackled the questions from moderators, but it was easy to separate the contributions of their respective running mates Ma'ruf Amin and Sandiaga Uno.

While Mr Sandiaga appeared energetic and proactive, often jumping in to back up Mr Prabowo's comments, Dr Ma'ruf, a senior ulama, left it almost too late into the debate before trying to make any real impact.

The performance of all four candidates in the first of five scheduled debates between them will be dissected over the following weeks by political commentators, analysts and the like.

But foremost on their minds will be whether they managed to convince and win over the undecided.

Indeed, while recent polling has Mr Joko and Dr Ma'ruf ahead of their challengers, swing voters – who experts say make up almost a quarter of the 192.84 million eligible voters – could still decide the result of the April 17 election.

Like other campaign events in Indonesia, yesterday's debate had a festive feel, with many political parties holding public viewings for supporters across the country.

The press pool, ubiquitous flash photography, stretch limousines and security men in dark suits – they all added to the pomp and pageantry at the debate venue, the four-star Bidakara Hotel in South Jakarta.

Members of Mr Joko's nine-party coalition even wore identical black bomber jackets – made famous by the President when he once borrowed his son's jacket for an official event – with the words Jokowi and Amin on the backs.

Despite the party atmosphere outside the hotel, there was an air of seriousness about the contest proper, with candidates crossing swords on issues of law, terrorism, corruption and human rights.

As the incumbent, Mr Joko naturally also found himself having to defend his decisions in office, including the appointment of members from his coalition to Cabinet positions.

But most of the exchanges stopped short of going into details, with both sides seemingly content to provide broad strokes on issues such as how radicalisation should be dealt with at a national level, as well as the representation of women in government.

So was there a clear winner in this first real face-off between the two candidate pairings three months before voters head to the polls?

The coming days will reveal which set of candidates received a bigger bump in their electability

For now, the spotlight will be on the lacklustre performance of Dr Ma'ruf, who was visibly uncomfortable during the initial stage of the debate. It will no doubt amplify what is surely a growing vulnerability in Mr Joko's re-election bid.

rating once the pollsters are done with their surveys.

For now, the spotlight will be on the lacklustre performance of Dr Ma'ruf, who was visibly uncomfortable during the initial stage of the debate. It will no doubt amplify what is surely a growing vulnerability in Mr Joko's re-election bid.

This may mean the President, popularly known as Jokowi, would have to carry the ticket on his own, unless his 75-year-old running mate turns in a better performance in the upcoming debates.

Fortunately for Dr Ma'ruf, his campaign machinery will have two more months to work with him before he goes up on his own against Mr Sandiaga at the March 17 debate between the candidates vying to be vice-president.

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News analysis

# Thai coronation expected to temper unrest

Protests against election delay unlikely to spin out of control, with military still in power



Tan Hui Yee

Indochina Bureau Chief  
In Bangkok

After weeks of speculation, Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha has given one of the strongest hints yet that the Feb 24 election will be delayed again. "The election will come surely, but any delay that is made will have a reason," he said in a speech on Wednesday. "This is just about adjusting the (election) time but it



Pro-democracy demonstrators at Ratchaprasong shopping district in Bangkok on Sunday holding drawings of Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha during a rally to protest against the possible delay of Thailand's general election. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

will certainly come before May 9." The looming delay has infuriated voters who have been looking forward to casting a fresh ballot ever since an annulled election in 2014 was followed by a military coup that overthrew a Pheu Thai party-led government. While protests by people demanding elections have broken out in various parts of the kingdom, including downtown Bangkok, analysts do not expect them to spin out of control. This is partly because the military maintains several levers of power still in the kingdom, say analysts. It keeps a constant surveillance on political activists, for example. And Thais are also readying for the first coronation in almost seven decades. King Maha Vajiralongkorn will be officially crowned from May 4 to 6, some three years after ascending the throne. Discussion about the 66-year-old monarch, who also keeps a home in Germany, tends to be hushed by traditional reverence for the palace and a lese majeste law that puts anyone convicted of insulting the king at risk of being jailed for up to 15 years.

Given how the new Constitution enacted after the coup makes it difficult for any big party to win a straight majority, many expect the election to be followed by a period of political bargaining, and even the post-election government to be unstable. Should the polls be pushed too far beyond Feb 24, a new government may not be formed in time for the coronation. According to the law, the government has until May 9 to hold an election. Some officials, including Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Krea-ngam, have suggested that the election may clash with preparations for the coronation. But pro-election quarters allege that the junta is merely trying to cling on to power. Army chief Apirat Kongsompong, who has steadily risen to prominence as the junta's secretary-general, a special officer attached to the royal bodyguards department and one of the newest board members of the Crown Property Bureau, has called the protesters troublemakers. "I believe others who truly understand the situation will be annoyed... There will be a royal event which is so important to this country," he said last Saturday. Protesters are expected to stand down by the time the royal ceremony rolls around. "Thai people are happy about this event," said Dr Napisa Waitookiat, the dean of Naresuan University's social sciences faculty. "It's an unwritten rule that there will be no demonstration during those days." Given the growing impatience on the ground, it is not clear which political faction will benefit the most from this delay. Dr Titipol Phakdeewanich, the dean of Ubon Ratchathani University's political science faculty, thinks Pheu Thai will gain some ground. "It's a brand that has been there before the coup. Its name is still on the minds of people," he said. Dr Napisa expects that the military government will try to use the extra time to implement policies that will put its allied political parties in a good light. Politicians, in any case, are not taking their feet off the pedal. They have criss-crossed the nation to meet supporters, and dished out aid to victims of a recent tropical storm. Self-exiled former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, widely seen as the power broker behind Pheu Thai, even launched a weekly podcast on Monday.

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Some officials, including Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Krea-ngam, have suggested that the election may clash with preparations for the coronation. But pro-election quarters allege the junta is merely trying to cling on to power.

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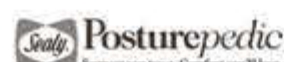
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**Miss Chen Si Jie IC No: SXXXX521C**

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# Volcano erupts in southern Japan

TOKYO • A volcano in southern Japan erupted yesterday, spewing ash and smoke 6km into the air over a small island.

There were no reports of injuries or damage from the eruption on Kuchinoerabu in Kagoshima prefecture in the far south of Japan.

A local official said there were no evacuations on the island, which is home to just 109 people.

Images broadcast by NHK show large plumes of ash and grey smoke billowing above the island, which regularly experiences eruptions.

“We heard a huge explosion and there was shaking like an earthquake,” a resident told NHK.

The meteorological agency said the eruption occurred shortly after it had issued a new warning.

“There have been eruptions there since last year but we sent an alert out (this morning) for this latest eruption as it will have a wider impact,” said Mr Jun Fujimatsu, an official at the agency’s volcanic activity division.

“We have maintained a level



An image from the Japan Meteorological Agency’s live webcam showing an eruption on Kuchinoerabu Island in Kagoshima prefecture. A local official said there were no evacuations on the island, which is home to just 109 people. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

CHINA RUSSIA  
NORTH KOREA SOUTH KOREA  
Sea of Japan/ East Sea  
Mount Ontake  
JAPAN  
Tokyo  
Pacific Ocean

The eruption on Kuchinoerabu yesterday spewed ash and smoke 6km into the air

Source: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

In January last year, a Japanese soldier was killed and several other people injured after an eruption near a popular ski resort north-west of the capital Tokyo.

On Sept 27, 2014, Japan suffered its deadliest eruption in almost 90 years when Mount Ontake, in central Nagano prefecture, burst unexpectedly into life.

Dozens of people were killed in the shock eruption, which occurred at a time when the peak was packed with hikers viewing the region’s spectacular autumn colours.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

three warning, which means a ban on entering the volcano area,” he told Agence France-Presse (AFP). “There are several craters at the volcano... The danger zone is 2km from the Shindake crater.”

He added: “We do not think the latest eruption will engulf the entire island.”

Government spokesman Yoshihide Suga said the plume of smoke and ash from the eruption rose 6,000m.

“But there is no impact on the community and no injury or damage has been reported,” he told reporters.

There are “71 households comprising 109 people living on the island,

including some who are just a few kilometres from the crater”, local official Shogo Sado told AFP.

He confirmed no evacuations had yet been ordered but said preparations were being made in case it became necessary to move people, some of whom are elderly and frail.

In 2015, all 140 people living on

the island were evacuated after a violent eruption that sent black clouds up as high as 9,000m and produced a five-minute volcanic quake.

Japan, with scores of active volcanoes, sits on the so-called Pacific “Ring of Fire”, where a large proportion of the world’s earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are recorded.

# Musk tweets ‘boring’ offer for Sydney tunnel

## Tesla co-founder makes ‘bargain price’ pitch to help solve Aussie city’s congestion woes

SYDNEY • Australia could become a test ground for another of Mr Elon Musk’s massive infrastructure projects after the maverick billionaire

tweeted a “bargain” price to build a tunnel through a mountain to solve Sydney’s traffic woes.

Mr Musk in 2017 made a pitch on

Twitter – and then the offer – to build what was the world’s biggest battery in an Australian state to solve its severe energy crisis.

The co-founder of electric car-maker Tesla recently set his sights on tackling city traffic via low-cost tunnels created by his Boring Company, and in December unveiled a

sample project near Los Angeles.

So when an Australian MP tweeted Mr Musk on Wednesday about the costs of drilling through a mountain range north of Sydney, he responded quickly.

“I’m a lawmaker in Sydney, which is choking with traffic. How much to build a 50km tunnel through the

Blue Mountains and open up the west of our State?” Mr Jeremy Buckingham of New South Wales asked.

“About \$15M/km for a two way high speed transit, so probably around \$750M plus maybe \$50M/station,” Mr Musk replied, with his response liked more than 22,000 times on Twitter.

He has more than 24 million followers on the social media platform.

Another billionaire, Mr Mike Cannon-Brookes, who founded Australian software start-up Atlassian, weighed in on the exchange, saying the estimated price tag “sounds like a bargain for Sydney”.

The population of the Sydney region has grown by around 25 per cent since 2011 to reach 5.4 million, out of a national population of 25 million, and road congestion is a major concern.

There was no sign the exchange of tunnel tweets would lead to any action, but it could bring some positive publicity for the entrepreneur.

Mr Musk has risen to prominence with a series of ambitious ventures, particularly Tesla, but has also drawn plenty of criticism for instances of volatile behaviour.

He waged a public battle with a rescuer who helped save a group of boys trapped in a cave in Thailand last year, calling him a “pedo guy” after the Briton slammed his idea of a mini-submarine to save the children as a public relations stunt.

Meanwhile, riders who have tested out Boring’s prototype tunnel – where cars are lowered by lifts then slotted into tracks and propelled along at high speeds – have complained of a bumpy journey.

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# Law proposed to ban US chip sales to Huawei, ZTE

Move, which China describes as hysteria, adds fuel to trade war

WASHINGTON/BEIJING • A bipartisan group of US lawmakers has introduced Bills that would ban the sale of US chips or other components to Huawei Technologies, ZTE Corp or

other Chinese telecommunications companies that violate US sanctions or export control laws. The proposed law drew sharp criticism from China, intensifying a bitter trade war between Beijing and Washington. China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Hua Chunying called the US legislation "hysteria". The Bills were introduced on

Wednesday, shortly before the Wall Street Journal reported that federal prosecutors were probing claims that Huawei stole T-Mobile and other US businesses. The report said an indictment could be coming soon on allegations that Huawei stole T-Mobile technology, called Tappu, which mimicked human fingers and was used to test smartphones. Huawei, in a statement, said the company and T-Mobile settled their disputes in 2017 after a US jury verdict that found "neither damage, unjust enrichment nor wilful and malicious conduct by Huawei in T-Mobile's trade secret claim". Ms Hua urged US lawmakers to block the Bills, saying: "I believe the action of these few representatives are an expression of extreme arrogance, and an extreme lack of self-confidence... the whole world can see very clearly that the real intent of the United States is to employ its state apparatus in every conceivable way to suppress and block out China's high-tech companies." The legislation is the latest in a long list of actions taken to fight what some in the Trump administration call China's cheating through intellectual property theft, illegal corporate subsidies and rules hampering US corporations that want to sell their goods in China. Last November, the US Justice Department unveiled an initiative to probe China's trade practices with a goal of bringing trade secret theft cases. At the time, Washington had announced an indictment against Chinese chipmaker Fujian Jinhua Integrated Circuit for stealing trade secrets from US semiconductor company Micron Technology, relating to research and development of memory storage devices. Jinhua, which has denied any wrongdoing, was put on a list of entities that cannot buy goods from US firms. On Capitol Hill, Senator Tom Cotton and Representative Mike Gal-

agher, both Republicans, along with Senator Chris Van Hollen and Representative Ruben Gallego, both Democrats, introduced the Bills that would require President Donald Trump to ban the export of US components to any Chinese telecom firms that violate US sanctions or export control laws. The Bills specifically cite ZTE and Huawei, both of which are viewed with suspicion in the US because of fears that their switches and other gear could be used to spy on Americans. Both have also been accused of failing to heed US sanctions on Iran. "Huawei is effectively an intelligence-gathering arm of the Chinese Communist Party whose founder and CEO was an engineer for the People's Liberation Army," Mr Cotton wrote in a statement. "If Chinese telecom companies like Huawei violate our sanctions or export control laws, they should receive nothing less than the death penalty - which this denial order would provide," he added. REUTERS

## Chinese naval ships on friendly visit to Philippines



Filipinos and members of the Chinese community in the Philippines yesterday welcomed a three-vessel Chinese naval escort as it docked in Manila for a five-day friendly visit. The visiting ships - missile frigates Wuhu and Handan, and supply ship Dongpinghu - were making their last port call after completing their escort mission in the Gulf of Aden and the waters off Somalia. This is the second visit by Chinese navy ships to the Philippines since President Rodrigo Duterte took office in 2016. The first visit was in April 2017 in Davao City, the home city of Mr Duterte, in the southern Philippines. "I believe the visit will enhance military to military exchanges and mutual trust, deepen friendship and strengthen cooperation between our two navies," Rear-Admiral Xu Haihua, commander of the 30th Escort Task Group of the Chinese Navy, said. Commodore Wilfredo Burgunio, deputy commander of the Philippine Fleet, told Xinhua that he believes the visit will promote relations between the two navies. "We welcome this (visit). And we hope to have more engagements like this," he said. The Chinese Navy will engage in various activities during the visit, including courtesy calls on the Philippines' senior navy officers, a shipboard reception and friendly games with their Philippine Navy counterparts. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

## Chinese fake goods proving real hard to stamp out

SHANGHAI • China has come down hard on its world-renowned counterfeit industry. Bazaars lined with fake watches, shoes and bags have been demolished in recent years. A new law effective from Jan 1 promises to punish online retailers with up to 2 million yuan (\$400,000) in fines for bogus goods sold on their platforms. But Chinese counterfeiters - still the most prolific in the world - have already reshaped their businesses by retreating to even more private spaces online. Many are hawking their wares via social messaging networks such as Tencent Holdings' WeChat. They also market their offerings at home and globally on platforms including Instagram and ByteDance's TikTok. Buyers then order and pay through private messaging apps.

Such transactions are arguably "friend to friend" and not e-commerce as defined by the new law. A fake black Dior saddle bag can go for about US\$255 (\$346) on a Chinese social media network - less than one-tenth of the price of the real thing, but still pricier than the average high street bag. It looks and feels real - a smooth, buttery leather with the heft of a true luxury bag. And it arrives in just a day or two, with what are purportedly Dior's engraved box, red ribbon and certificate of authenticity. The skill of the counterfeiters and their growing ability to leverage global social networks has left Beijing playing catch-up as it tries to stamp out fake luxury goods. "The income disparity across China's diverse population - coastal versus inland, urban elites versus migrant workers - means

that lower-priced goods, including those accused of being fake, will unlikely lose their market in China any time soon," said Assistant Professor Fan Yang of the University of Maryland, who has written a book on Chinese counterfeiters. Instagram said it has systems in place to catch counterfeit content before a purchase is made, and that it has tools where buyers can report purchases they are unhappy with. The difficulties in stamping out counterfeiting in luxury goods shows the challenges Beijing faces in ongoing trade war negotiations as it attempts to assure the United States that it can address intellectual property theft - a key grievance of foreign companies. The global trade in counterfeit products will balloon to US\$991 billion by 2022 from US\$461 billion in 2013, according to the research



company Frontier Economics. China and Hong Kong are by far the biggest source of exported counterfeits, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. On Instagram, counterfeiters often put up a picture of the bag they are hawking without specifying if it is fake or real. They include contact details for Chinese or international messaging services. Mr Eugene Low, a Hong Kong-based partner at law firm Hogan Lovells, expects China's new legislation will further motivate e-commerce firms to step up their efforts to fight fake goods. "They won't want to be the first target of enforcement," he said. Even so, the grey areas in the new legislation could leave counterfeiters continuing to exploit the loopholes. Mr Pedro Yip, a partner at Oliver Wyman consultancy, said: "How the law would be enforced would be unclear at this time." BLOOMBERG

Counterfeit underwear sold in Beijing. Bazaars that hawk fake watches, shoes and bags may have been demolished in recent years, but Chinese counterfeiters are now selling their wares via social messaging networks like Tencent Holdings' WeChat. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

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## China's trade negotiator to have talks in US

BEIJING • China's top trade negotiator will travel to the United States for talks later this month ahead of a March deadline to avoid bruising tariff hikes. The commerce ministry yesterday said Vice-Premier Liu He will visit Washington on Jan 30-31 for the negotiations, following up on talks between lower-level officials in Beijing earlier this month. US President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping agreed to a three-month trade war truce in December, suspending US plans to raise tariffs on Chinese goods to let negotiators find a solution. Mr Liu and US officials will "hold negotiations on economic and trade issues and work together to push forward and implement the important consensus" reached by Mr Xi and Mr Trump, ministry spokesman Gao Feng told reporters. But Mr Liu's trip could run into complications after a Wednesday report said the US authorities were in the advanced stages of a criminal investigation that could result in an indictment of Chinese telecom giant Huawei. Citing anonymous sources, the Wall Street Journal said the Department of Justice was looking into allegations of theft of trade secrets from Huawei's US business partners, including a T-Mobile robotic device used to test smartphones. US lawmakers also introduced a Bill to ban the export of American parts and components to Chinese telecom companies which are in violation of US export control or sanctions laws - with Huawei and fellow Chinese firm ZTE the likely targets. China has blasted the US actions. "The whole world is very clear that the real intention of the United States is to use every possible piece of state machinery to suppress and smear China's high-tech companies," said foreign ministry spokesman Hua Chunying. The US lawmakers' actions reeked of "extreme arrogance", she said, adding: "The actions of the US are not the normal actions of a normal country, let alone the world's leading power." Mr Liu will travel at the invitation of US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Mr Gao said. Washington has been clamouring for an end to the forced transfer - and even theft - of American technology, as well as steep government subsidies for Chinese companies. The Trump administration also wants Beijing to buy more American goods to narrow a yawning trade gap and allow foreign players better access to the Chinese market. China's trade surplus with the US hit a record US\$323.3 billion (\$438) last year, Chinese Customs data showed on Monday. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



# Trump could announce 2nd summit with Kim today

Pyongyang envoy to deliver letter to Trump in Washington, setting stage for summit

WASHINGTON • US President Donald Trump could announce a second summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as soon as today, following an expected meeting at the White House with a North Korean envoy, said US and Asian diplomats.

Mr Kim's lead negotiator, former spymaster Kim Yong Chol, is expected to carry a letter from the North Korean leader to Mr Trump when he arrives in Washington. He is expected to meet Mr Trump today, in what would be a repeat of an unusual diplomatic move ahead of the first summit between the two leaders last June.

The White House has not announced the envoy's visit, which comes amid wrangling within the administration over terms for a second Trump-Kim meeting and the promised eradication of North Korea's nuclear weapons.

Mr Trump has been upbeat about a second round of face-to-face negotiations with Mr Kim, despite a lack of measurable progress towards disarmament. "With North Korea, we have a very good dia-

logue," he said on Jan 6. "I'm going to not go any further than that. I'm just going to say it's very special. And anybody else but me, you'd be in war right now."

If announced soon, the summit would likely take place in March or April, with Danang, Vietnam, appearing the most likely venue, according to people familiar with the flurry of diplomatic activity.

Mr Trump and Mr Kim have exchanged letters in recent weeks, two people briefed on aspects of the diplomacy said. "We are working to make progress on our goal of achieving the final, fully verified denuclearisation of North Korea, and the President looks forward to meeting Chairman Kim again at their second summit at a place and time yet to be determined," said a White House spokesman who requested anonymity.

Mr Kim Yong Chol, who was set to arrive last night, is also expected to meet Central Intelligence Agency director Gina Haspel, who has become more involved in matters related to Pyongyang's nuclear threat in recent months.

If the two sides make progress, US officials are hoping to establish the first working-level talks between US special representative to

the negotiations, Mr Stephen Biegun, and his North Korean counterpart, Vice-Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui.

Pyongyang has repeatedly given Mr Biegun the cold shoulder and denied meetings with him, but people familiar with the deliberations said the two could meet shortly in Western Europe if Mr Kim Yong Chol's visit goes well.

North Korea is believed to have solidified its negotiation strategy after meetings between Mr Kim Jong Un and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing last week. It remains under heavy US sanctions, including limits on travel, so Mr Kim Yong Chol's trip could take place only with high-level approval.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is expected to meet the North Korean official on this visit, but it is clear that North Korea's goal is to speak directly with Mr Trump, said diplomats and others who follow the rogue regime closely.

"I think the North Koreans have come to the conclusion that the only one they can deal with is Trump," said Mr Ken Gause, a North Korea expert at the Centre for Naval Analysis. "They believe this is a leader-to-leader relationship." WASHINGTON POST

TRUMP CARD

I think the North Koreans have come to the conclusion that the only one they can deal with is Trump.



MR KEN GAUSE, a North Korea expert at the Centre for Naval Analysis.

## Vietnam preparing for visit by N. Korean leader

HANOI • Hanoi is preparing to receive North Korean leader Kim Jong Un for a state visit, two sources told Reuters, while officials and diplomats said Vietnam is keen to host a second summit between Mr Kim and US President Donald Trump.

A source said Mr Kim will travel to Vietnam for an official state visit

after the Chinese New Year. A separate source confirmed Mr Kim's visit but did not give any dates.

Communist-ruled Vietnam, which has good relations with both the United States and North Korea, has been widely touted as the most likely venue for a second meeting between Mr Trump and Mr Kim.

It is keen to host the summit as a demonstration of its normalised ties with the US, its foe during the Vietnam War, said a Vietnamese government official and other diplomatic sources.

The Vietnamese source did not confirm if a state visit by Mr Kim would be combined with a US-North Korean summit.

Both Hanoi and the central Vietnam city of Danang have been viewed by analysts as possible locations for a second summit.

A senior Danang-based official said the city had not been asked to host such an event, but had re-

ceived instructions to prepare for a possible "A1" visit, referring to a high-profile foreign leader.

North Korea can learn from Vietnam's experience in building ties with the US, said Mr Le Dang Doanh, a Vietnamese economist and former government adviser who has given lectures to North Korean delegations visiting Vietnam.

"They asked a lot about how Vietnam can normalise relations with the US after losing so many Vietnamese lives during the war," he said. "I told them we never forget the past, but we also look to the future." REUTERS

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# Plastics, consumer goods makers pledge to rein in waste

FRANKFURT • Global companies including BASF, DowDuPont, Procter & Gamble and SABIC have formed an alliance to fight plastic waste, pledging to spend US\$1.5 billion (S\$2 billion) over the next five years on the effort.

The Alliance to End Plastic Waste (AEPW), unveiled by its 28 founding companies on Wednesday, convened amid reports of a worsening environmental crisis from about eight million tonnes of plastic waste that end up in oceans every year, a finding that has led some countries to ban various single-use plastic products.

Current alliance members have committed more than US\$1 billion to the project over the next five years, while money that additional members will pledge should take the five-year budget to about US\$1.5 billion, a spokesman said.

The funds will be spent on waste collection infrastructure mainly in Africa and Asia, on technology for recycling and re-use of waste, on educating governments as well as local communities, and on cleaning up highly polluted areas.

The alliance, made up of plastics makers for the most part, said about 90 per cent of global marine litter comes from just 10 rivers and over half of the land-based plastic litter leaking into oceans originates from five Asian countries: China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

AEPW counts none of China's major plastics and chemical groups – Sinochem, ChemChina and Sinopec – among its members but the spokesman said discussions to enlist Chinese players are continuing.

IHS Markit said in an October report that 59 per cent of global plastic waste comes from packaging.

Amid rising consumer concern over plastic waste, consumer goods heavyweights such as Kraft Heinz, Nestle, Unilever and Henkel have individually pledged to make their packaging recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025.

Nestle said on Tuesday it will start to drop plastic straws from its products from next month. It is also working on biodegradable water bottles in a drive to reduce plastic waste.

The Swiss group, which is the world's biggest packaged food company, will start using alternative materials such as paper and adopt designs to replace plastic straws and reduce litter.

Procter & Gamble and Henkel are the only branded consumer goods makers among AEPW members now, but the alliance's spokesman said more would likely join over the next few weeks.

The location of the alliance's headquarters has not yet been decided and the search for a chief executive is ongoing, the spokesman added. REUTERS

Nestle said on Tuesday it will start to drop plastic straws from its products from next month. It is also working on biodegradable water bottles in a drive to reduce plastic waste.



Transgender ascetics taking a holy bath on Tuesday at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati rivers during the Kumbh Mela festival in Allahabad in India's Uttar Pradesh state. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

# Hindu festival in India soaked in faith and politics

Ruling BJP hopes costly event – the first with transgenders – will translate into win at polls

Debarshi Dasgupta  
India Correspondent  
In New Delhi

One of Hinduism's biggest religious congregations began this week with the achievement of a historic milestone. Dozens of transgender ascetics bathed at the holy confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati rivers near Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh, alongside other Hindu ascetics at the Kumbh Mela, for the first time.

Hindus believe bathing in these holy waters at the auspicious time of the Kumbh brings salvation from the cycle of life and death.

The presence of transgenders in the crowd on Tuesday was described as a step towards the acceptance of the community which numbers around two million in India.

Around 22.5 million devotees bathed on the first day of the festival organised by the government of Uttar Pradesh and backed by an extensive publicity campaign.

The event has also taken on a political overtone this year, ahead of parliamentary elections due in

around three months' time.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is in power in the state, hopes a successful culmination of the event will yield political support from potential voters.

The state and federal governments have allocated 42 billion rupees (S\$802 million) for this event, more than three times the budget of the Kumbh Mela in 2013, making this year's congregation perhaps the costliest.

This is the first time the congregation is being held after the Kumbh Mela was inscribed by Unesco in its list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity in December 2017.

The Indian government has also promoted it internationally to attract tourists and strengthen its soft power the way it has done using yoga.

The Ministry of External Affairs even took a large group of heads of foreign diplomatic missions to the site last month for a preview of the mela, or gathering.

There has, however, been some controversy over the renaming of this year's event. The Kumbh is held once every 12 years, with an

Ardh ("Half") Kumbh six years later. This congregation has been dubbed the Kumbh Mela although it is the Ardh version, with the next Kumbh due in 2025. The BJP state government renamed the event the Kumbh Mela last month.

Many believe that the government, by giving it the status of a full-fledged Kumbh Mela and organising it on such a grand scale, has political goals in mind.

At least three federal ministers took part in the dip on Tuesday in the state that accounted for 71 of the 282 seats the BJP won in 2014.

Professor Badri Narayan, director of Govind Ballabh Pant Social Science Institute in Allahabad, wrote recently in an opinion piece that the mela is part of the BJP's effort to "weave and strengthen Hindu identity".

It is seeking to draw support from members of marginalised Hindu caste groups, who have conventionally voted for parties other than the BJP.

The congregation will go on until March 4 near Allahabad, which was also renamed Prayagraj by the state government in October last year, as it did away with a name that was considered by some as "Islamic-sounding".

debarshi@sph.com.sg

# Two years in jail for launderette cat killer

KUALA LUMPUR • The Selayang Sessions Court in Selangor yesterday sentenced a taxi driver to two years in jail for causing the death of a pregnant cat by putting it in a dryer at a launderette.

Judge Rasyiah Ghazali meted out the sentence after A. Mohanraj, 42, changed his plea to guilty in court. The judge ordered the jail sentence to start from the date of Mohanraj's arrest last Sept 14.

Mohanraj and two others – technician S.S. Satthiya, 26, and contract worker, K. Ganesh, 41 – had claimed trial last September to committing the offence at a launderette in Kuala Lumpur on Sept 11.

The charge carries a maximum fine of RM100,000 (S\$33,000) or a

jail term of up to three years, or both, upon conviction.

It was reported that Satthiya had received a discharge not amounting to an acquittal, while Ganesh maintained his not guilty plea.

In his testimony, Selangor Veterinary Service Department Prosecuting Officer Roslan Mohd Isa asked the court to mete out a harsh sentence, as what the accused had done was cruel.

"This case is of public interest as it involves torturing a defenceless animal. This attitude is not accepted by society," he said.

Mohanraj, who was unrepresented, asked for a lighter sentence as he was repentant and had a family to feed.

"I feel regret. I apologise to all Malaysians and I promise not to do this again... When I was detained, I was jeered and insulted by other inmates for the crime," he told the court.

According to the facts of the case, a launderette manager received a call from a customer on Sept 11, informing him that there was a cat carcass in a dryer.

The manager then instructed his employee to examine the dryer, and the carcass was discovered.

Closed-circuit television footage showed two men, one of whom took the cat out from under a table in the launderette and threw it into the dryer. Both the accused men inserted tokens into the dryer before exiting the launderette.

The manager lodged a police report on Sept 14 and the arrests were made on the same day.

Malaysians expressed their outrage after CCTV footage went viral on social media.

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# Pelosi asks Trump to delay State of Union speech amid shutdown

## House Speaker cites security fears but Republicans not convinced

WASHINGTON • With the partial US government shutdown dragging on, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has urged President Donald Trump to reschedule his State of the Union address – a move that could deny him the opportunity to use the pageantry of the speech to attack Democrats in their own chamber over the impasse.

With Mr Trump's address set for Jan 29, Ms Pelosi wrote him a letter citing security concerns because the Secret Service, which is required to provide security for the

address, has not received funding during the shutdown.

The stand-off was triggered by Mr Trump's demand for US\$5.7 billion (S\$7.7 billion) to fund a wall along the US' border with Mexico, which Democrats oppose.

Presidents traditionally deliver the address, which lays out the administration's goals for the upcoming year, in the House of Representatives chamber before a joint session of Congress and the majority of the Cabinet.

Democrats took control of the House after last November's congressional polls. During the shutdown, Mr Trump has routinely blamed them for the stalemate, although he had earlier said he would

take responsibility for it.

Ms Pelosi, speaking to reporters, suggested that if Mr Trump would not agree to reschedule the speech until the government reopens, he could deliver it from the Oval Office instead, a setting that would lack the grandeur of a congressional address.

"Sadly, given the security concerns and unless government reopens this week, I suggest we work together to determine another suitable date after government has reopened for this address or for you to consider delivering your State of the Union address in writing to the Congress," Ms Pelosi wrote in the letter.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer told reporters later: "I think it's a good idea to delay (the

speech) until the government is open."

The White House had no immediate comment on Ms Pelosi's request. Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said on Twitter her department and the Secret Service were prepared to handle a presidential speech at the Capitol.

Representative Jim Jordan of the House Freedom Caucus, a group of conservative Republicans allied to Mr Trump, said Ms Pelosi's move showed Democrats were "more focused on stopping the President than they are on serving the country".

Both sides sought to ratchet up the pressure over the longest government shutdown in US history,

that has now entered a 27th day.

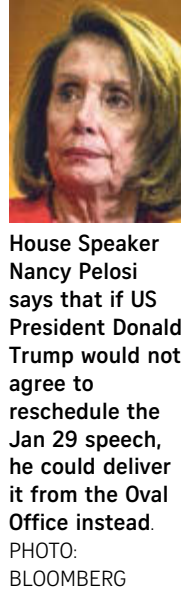
Democratic senators huddled on the outdoor steps leading to the Senate in 3.9 deg C weather, holding photographs of constituents furloughed by the shutdown or otherwise hurt by it, with Mr Schumer saying Mr Trump "is using these men and women as pawns".

At the same time, the President hosted a bipartisan group of House members to discuss finding a solution to the impasse. White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said the meeting was constructive.

A handful of Republican senators were circulating a bipartisan draft letter to Mr Trump asking him to support a measure that would reopen the government for three weeks while they work on funding legislation to address his concerns about border security.

But a Democrat who signed the letter said it would not be sent unless a substantial number of Republicans signed it.

Mr Trump on Wednesday signed legislation that would ensure 800,000 federal employees receive back pay when the government reopens. REUTERS



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi says that if US President Donald Trump would not agree to reschedule the Jan 29 speech, he could deliver it from the Oval Office instead. PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

# New setback for Trump's Syria withdrawal plan after ISIS attack

WASHINGTON • US President Donald Trump's decision to pull troops out of Syria came under renewed pressure after a suicide attack claimed by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the terrorist group which he said a month ago was effectively defeated.

Four Americans were killed and three wounded in the attack in the northern town of Manbij on Wednesday. The Pentagon said its forces were on a "routine patrol" when the attack occurred.

The Syrian Observatory For Human Rights, which monitors the almost eight-year-old civil war through activists on the ground, says at least 16 people were killed by the explosion.

The incident represents the latest hurdle to Mr Trump's goal of bringing US troops home from intractable Middle East conflicts.

Since abruptly announcing late last year that he was pulling troops out of Syria "now", Mr Trump and his top advisers have sought to establish specific conditions for the withdrawal – promising to depart slowly, to continue striking ISIS on the way out and seeking assurances from Turkey that it would not at-

tack America's Kurdish allies.

But Republican Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, a prominent Trump ally who is critical of his Syria plan, quickly seized on the deadly incident to urge that the President reconsider his decision to pull out the roughly 2,000 American troops, saying his announcement has backfired by encouraging ISIS to strike.

Mr Trump's withdrawal statements "set in motion enthusiasm by the enemy we're fighting" and "make people we're trying to help wonder about us, and as they get bolder, the people we're trying to help are going to get more uncertain", Mr Graham said at a judiciary committee hearing.

Mr Trump's defenders were equally quick.

Republican Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky suggested the suicide strike showed the futility of keeping US forces in Syria after much of ISIS' territorial footprint in the country had been eliminated.

"If you're going to wait for a time when perfect peace breaks out in the Middle East, you'll never leave," Mr Paul said in an interview, adding that he planned to go directly to Mr



Wednesday's suicide attack by ISIS in the Syrian town of Manbij killed four Americans, and represents the latest hurdle to President Donald Trump's goal of bringing US troops home from intractable Middle East conflict. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Trump to say "stay the course".

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has long sought an American departure so he could target the Kurdish militias he calls terrorists, said any hesitation by Mr

Trump in withdrawing would "amount to a victory" for ISIS.

The day's events renewed a tug of war over a policy that has divided the administration.

The President's original an-

nouncement led to the resignation of Defence Secretary James Mattis and the top US envoy to the global coalition to defeat ISIS.

In addition to fuelling concern that the US was abandoning its Kurdish allies on the battlefield, the announcement sparked speculation that the pullout would give ISIS space to regroup.

"Those favouring withdrawal will say that these deaths are the sort of

pointlessly incurred costs that should be ended by getting US troops out of Syria," said former Central Intelligence Agency officer Paul Pillar, now a professor at Georgetown University.

"Those resisting withdrawal will argue that the bombing demonstrates that ISIS has not been defeated. The latter position is more likely to have impact on policy." BLOOMBERG

# US set to pull out of missile pact with Russia

BRUSSELS • The US has rejected a Russian offer to save a landmark treaty that keeps nuclear missiles out of Europe because it could not be properly verified, setting the stage for Washington to withdraw from the pact next month.

After a meeting in Geneva between Russian and US officials, Undersecretary for Arms Control and International Security Andrea Thompson said on Wednesday that Moscow was refusing to allow proper inspection of a new Russian missile system that Washington says breaks the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

The INF Treaty, negotiated by then US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and ratified by the US Senate, eliminated the medium-range missile arsenals of the world's two biggest nuclear powers and reduced their ability to launch a nuclear strike at short notice.

The treaty bans land-based missiles with a range between 500km and 5,500km.

"We weren't able to break any new ground... with Russia," Ms Thompson said of Tuesday's meeting with Russian Foreign Ministry officials. "Based on yesterday's discussions and corresponding rhetoric today, we see no indication that Russia would choose compliance," Ms Thompson added.

The United States and its Nato allies want Russia to destroy its 9M729 nuclear-capable cruise mis-

sile system, which Washington says could allow Moscow to strike Europe at short notice, and comply with the INF treaty.

Without a deal, a US withdrawal will start from Feb 2.

"Russia must come back into compliance," Nato secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg told Reuters after a meeting at Nato in which Ms Thompson briefed allies.

But he said the alliance needed to be prepared for the collapse of the INF Treaty and that he had asked the military authorities to look into the consequences, although he declined to go into details.

European allies are worried about the deployment of US missiles in Europe, as happened in the 1980s, while being caught up in nuclear competition between Moscow and Washington.

"This is part of a pattern where Russia is investing in, modernising, exercising and testing nuclear weapons," Mr Stoltenberg said.

"I think the whole idea is for Russia to try to be able to reestablish a sphere of influence where they can try to intimidate and control some of their neighbours."

Russia denies any such strategy and accuses President Donald Trump of using Moscow as a pretext to quit the INF.

Earlier on Wednesday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Moscow was ready to save the pact and the US had not properly considered Moscow's proposals. REUTERS

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# Sensors in space could be part of new US defence plan

Trump set to unveil missile defence strategy that will include early warning and tracking

WASHINGTON • US President Donald Trump was due to unveil a revamped missile defence strategy yesterday that looks at ways to boost the country's security, including by possibly deploying a new layer of space-based sensors to detect and track enemy missiles.

The missile defence review will also recommend studying experimental technologies, including prospects for space-based arms that might be able to shoot down enemy missiles – a throwback to Ronald Reagan's so-called "Star Wars" initiative in the 1980s.

"Space, I think, is the key to the next step of missile defence," a senior Trump administration official told reporters ahead of the document's release.

"A space-based layer of sensors is something we are looking at to help get early warning and tracking and discrimination of missiles when they are launched."

The official, who asked not to be identified, stressed that the viability of space-based missile defence weaponry was only being studied and no decisions had been made.

The investments come on top of previously announced US plans to increase the number of ground-based interceptors over the next several years, hiking the number positioned at Fort Greely, Alaska,

to 64 from 44.

US military officials have long stressed that America's missile defences are primarily designed to counter attacks from countries with more limited arsenals, like North Korea, which intelligence officials believe is still advancing its nuclear programme despite a halt to missile launches last year.

For Mr Trump, who is trying to revive efforts to persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear arsenal, the report's release comes at an awkward moment.

Three North Korean officials, including the top envoy involved in talks with the United States, are booked on a flight to Washington, suggesting possible movement towards a second summit between Mr Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, according to South Korean media.

It was unclear to what extent the report would single out North Korea. But the senior Trump administration official suggested it would at least be mentioned.

Mr Trump had declared in June that Pyongyang no longer posed a nuclear threat, buoyed by optimism following his landmark summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore.

Pentagon officials contend that US missile defences are too few to be able to counter a first-strike on the US homeland by a major nuclear power, like Russia or China. Washington hopes those countries will instead be deterred from attacks by America's nuclear arsenal. Still, Russia views US missile defence advances as a threat and Mr Trump's report is likely to stoke tensions with Moscow.

China, in turn, has also alarmed the Pentagon with advances in super-fast "hypersonic" technology, which could let Beijing field missiles that are far harder to detect.

In a report earlier this week that singled out the hypersonic threat, the Pentagon warned that China's military was "on the verge of fielding some of the most modern weapon systems in the world."

"In some areas, it already leads the world," the report said.

US officials, including Under-Secretary of Defence for Research and Engineering Michael Griffin, believe a space-based sensor layer could help detect missiles moving at hypersonic speeds. REUTERS

# Five die as rain, snowstorms hit California

ATLANTA • At least five people have died in severe rain and snowstorms that blanketed parts of the US state of California with at least 1.5m of snow in the Sierra Nevada mountains this week, besides triggering flooding and mudslides, officials said.

Forecasters expect the bitter weather to push eastwards into the Rockies and the Midwest through the weekend, while the California Highway Patrol said rain-slicked highways led to two fatal accidents that killed four people.

A family of three, including a one-year-old baby, died in El Dorado County on Tuesday, after their car spun across a rain-soaked freeway to hit another car, the San Francisco Chronicle said.

On Wednesday, a man died in a storm-related car wreck in Napa County, highway patrol dispatchers said. And one man in Oakland was killed after being struck by a tree, uprooted by the wind and rain, that fell on a homeless encampment, reports said.

High winds could topple more trees as the soil gets wetter and more saturated, the National Weather Service (NWS) warned.

Police in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara counties ordered evacua-



Vehicles being diverted on the Pacific Coast Highway as southern California faced another storm early on Wednesday, with rainfall expected to get heavier later into the day. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

tions on Tuesday from areas damaged by last year's wildfires because of the risk that heavy rain could trigger mud and debris flows on charred hillsides.

The NWS said significant road closures and travel delays were possible in the Los Angeles area, given risks of flash floods and rockslides.

The snow and rain were brought by a one-two punch of weather, af-

ter one Pacific storm hit California on Monday and a second, larger storm arrived on Wednesday. Forecasters said both are expected to sweep back-to-back through the Rockies and Midwest, gathering more strength from moisture from the Gulf of Mexico, before hitting the Ohio Valley and the North-east early next week.

Significant road closures and

travel delays remain likely in the Los Angeles area through today as storm remnants linger, said Mr Marc Chenard, a forecaster with the NWS' Weather Prediction Centre in College Park, Maryland.

The wet weather is a boon for farmers and ski areas, however, as most of California is recovering from years of drought, the US Drought Monitor said. REUTERS

## SPACE DEFENCE

Space, I think, is the key to the next step of missile defence... A space-based layer of sensors is something we are looking at to help get early warning and tracking and discrimination of missiles when they are launched.



A SENIOR TRUMP ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL, speaking to reporters ahead of the document's release yesterday.

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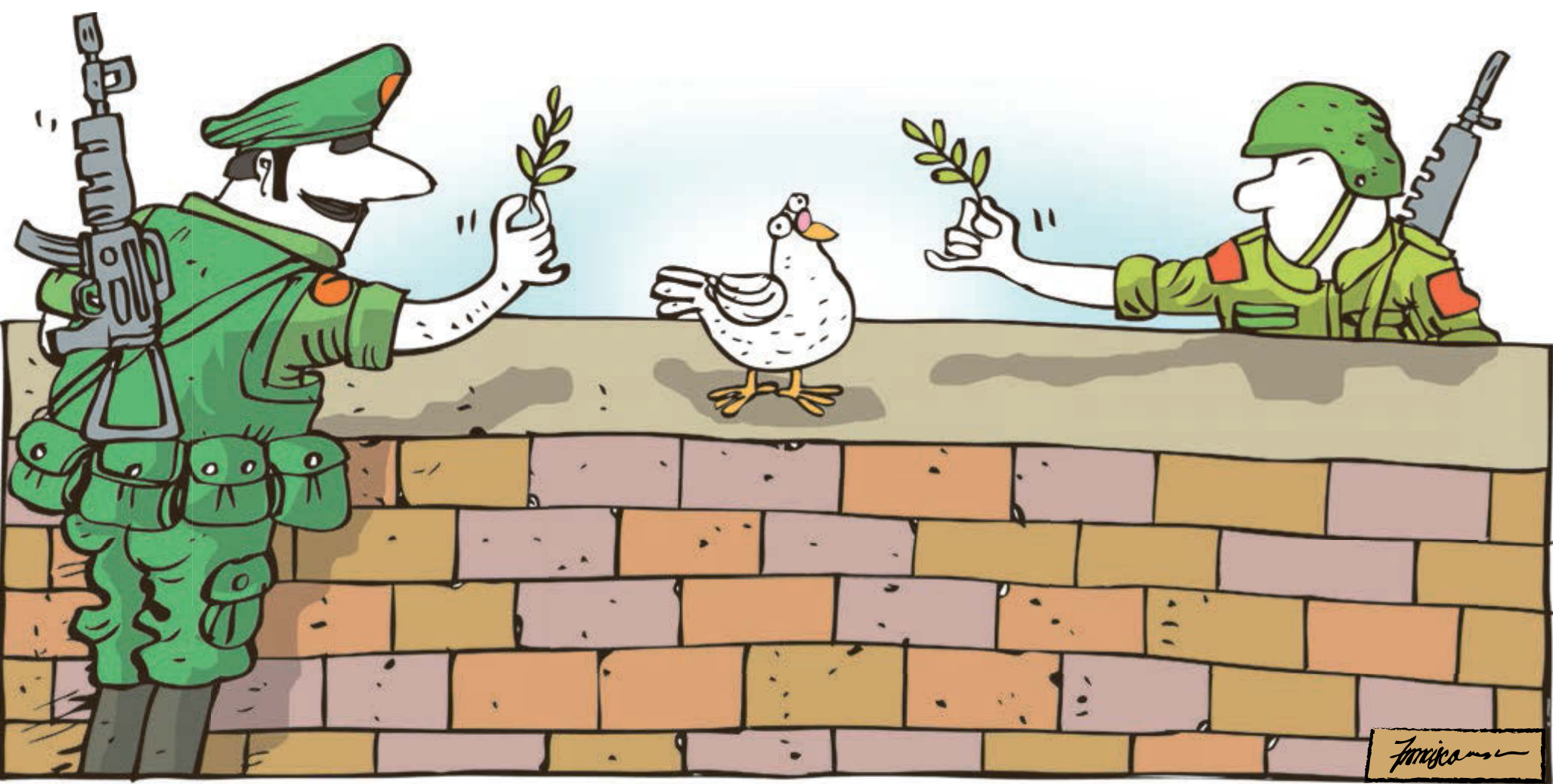
# Britain needs more time for Brexit

The only surprise in the outcome of the parliamentary vote on British Prime Minister Theresa May's plan for Britain's exit from the European Union was the 230-vote margin by which it was defeated. With more than two-thirds of British parliamentarians having voted against the deal, including 118 members of Mrs May's own Conservative Party, there is no chance that she can go back to Brussels to negotiate minor revisions and then expect her deal to go through on another vote – which might have been possible had her plan been defeated by only a slim margin. In other words, Mrs May's Brexit deal is as good as dead. But the problem is that British MPs do not seem to agree on any alternative. All the other options – a no-deal Brexit, a Norway-type agreement under which Britain would stay in the EU's Customs union and have to submit to its rules without being a member, and a second referendum on Brexit – are still open, but none of them appeal to a majority of MPs, let alone their voters.

As the dust settles following the crushing defeat of Mrs May's Brexit plan, the leader of the opposition Labour Party, Mr Jeremy Corbyn, proposes repeated no-confidence motions against her government, the first of which was defeated narrowly on Wednesday. But even if Mrs May's government were to be forced out, the Labour Party would have to contend with the same parliamentary arithmetic on Brexit that she did, and with the same EU officials. Nor has Labour itself come up with a coherent Brexit plan of its own. So a change of leadership at this stage would, if anything, be just a distraction that would be unlikely to produce a better outcome that would be acceptable to both the EU and British MPs.

What remains then is for Mrs May to work on an alternative to her deal, which she has resisted till now. To achieve a consensus on the terms of Brexit, she would need to reach across party lines, as each party has its share of various shades of Brexiteers and Remainers. Without having another plan to propose, there would be no point in going back to Brussels, because there would be nothing to negotiate.

But forging a multi-party consensus, even assuming it is possible, and then going back to Brussels to negotiate another deal with the EU, which again would have to be put to a parliamentary vote, would need time. The days that are left to March 29, the date Britain is scheduled to leave the EU, will be nowhere near enough. Moreover, in both Britain and the EU, businesses that need to plan for their future need clarity on Brexit urgently, as do citizens of the United Kingdom and the EU who live and work in each other's territories. So with the future of Brexit still up in the air, the only pragmatic option for now is for Britain to request an extension of the March 29 deadline, to which the EU, in its own interest, should be willing to agree.



SpeakingOfAsia

# China's last chance

India and China are engaged in a military build-up along their disputed borders even as they make an effort to improve ties on other fronts.



**Ravi Velloor**

Associate Editor

Last week, at the well-attended Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi, a session on emerging geometries in the Indo-Pacific, saw assembled the Indian and French navy chiefs, the head of the US Indo-Pacific Command, chief of the joint staff of Japan's Self-Defence Forces and the Australian Defence Force chief. Except for a rare question or two on Japan's military build-up and posture – principally by this writer and addressed to Japan's Admiral Katsutoshi Kawano – the talk was overwhelmingly China, China, China.

At one point, Indian navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba pointed out that China was on an unprecedented expansion of its navy, having added some 80 vessels over five years. Asked about the Chinese base in Djibouti, in the African corner of the Indian Ocean, he replied that Beijing's explanation

is that it needs an Indian Ocean presence to protect sea lanes from pirates infesting the waters, adding wryly that submarines were a rather improbable platform for such a purpose.

At the same time, some 14 km away at Signature Towers in Gurgaon, a satellite city of the Indian capital, top executives of SAIC Motor, the Chinese auto giant, were planning their entry into the vast Indian market, now unified under a common goods and services tax.

Next month, when the company launches its MG brand of sport utility vehicles, it will be the first time a Chinese car company starts selling into this vast market, following on the trail of consumer goods firms like mobile phone makers Oppo and Xiaomi, and equipment maker ZTE that have grabbed large chunks of the cellphone and telecommunications equipment business.

Tellingly, SAIC bought over the manufacturing facilities of General Motors as the Detroit giant exited the Indian market after speaking of making massive investments there not too long ago.

**MILITARY BUILD-UP** Meanwhile, both countries are massively beefing up their militaries across the undemarcated boundary, chiefly across the

borders of India's Arunachal Pradesh, a state that is claimed in its entirety by China, which refers to it these days as "southern Tibet".

India has poured missiles into its north-eastern region and raised two new army divisions while China has unified the Chengdu and Lanzhou military regions, which about India's northern borders, into the Western Theatre Command. It also has beefed up its missile regiments and is readying combat drones and anti-drone equipment.

In other words, rather than scaling back, both sides are enhancing their military capabilities along the disputed frontier even as they recently resumed their counter-terrorism joint exercises, the seventh of which was held recently in Chengdu.

A late December visit to New Delhi by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, which followed four-eyes discussions in Wuhan last April between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has raised hope that Asia's two tectonic plates – as former Singapore foreign minister George Yeo once described them – could find a solution to an issue that led to a brief border war in 1962, and remains unresolved to this day.

Since 1981, when talks started, between mid level officials, the level of representation has been steadily upgraded. Negotiations are currently led by Special Representatives. China is represented by a state councillor and India by its national security adviser. The SRs have held 21 rounds of talks, the last in November last year.

While the meetings are cordial, progress, if any, has been glacial. On some issues, there has even been backtracking.

About a decade ago, the two had agreed that any eventual settlement would not disturb "settled populations" but Beijing later informed New Delhi that this did not apply to the Buddhist enclave of Tawang, an area not far from where hails India's firebrand Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju. Indeed, China has become more rigid in its claim over Tawang latterly.

A holdover from history, when the departing British rulers left behind the loose and woolly McMahon Line, disputes over who owns what led to a brief and bitter border clash in 1962 which went badly for India, and subsequently, soured Indian perceptions about its big neighbour.

The Dalai Lama's flight to India in 1959, and his subsequent presence on Indian soil, has been another thorn in the Chinese side.

India, meanwhile, believes China used to fund insurgent groups in India's north-east and is always looking to pinch its strategic space.

It is unhappy that Beijing ignored its sensitivities by announcing a major Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with Pakistan that runs through territory claimed by India. This has led New Delhi to turn its back on the BRI, including boycotting a key conference hosted by President Xi to promote his initiative.

In June 2017, the two nearly came to blows again over a Himalayan valley in the Doklam trijunction with Bhutan, when Indian troops moved in to firmly stop Chinese soldiers

building a permanent road on a track they had used for patrolling. After an eyeball-to-eyeball stand-off lasting weeks, the two eventually moved their forces some distance back, defusing the situation.

Still, it was another reminder of how brittle the border issue remains. Before Doklam, the two came close to butting heads in the Chumar region in 2015 and 2016, and in the Depsang plains in 2013.

Since the Xi-Modi summit in Wuhan, where the two met alone and with delegations for over 10 hours, there seems to be an apparent determination to reset ties. The two sides decided to direct their militaries to avoid incidents that could aggravate things, and India has distanced itself from the Dalai Lama. China's Defence Minister Wei Fenghe, Public Security Minister Zhao Kezhi and Foreign Minister Wang Yi have all travelled to India.

Mr Wang and India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj agreed to set up high-level mechanisms to improve cultural and tourism exchanges, enhance contacts between the media on both sides and to promote yoga in China and Chinese martial arts in India. Yet, all these, while no doubt positive for the overall relationship, skirt the main issue.

This column has always held that an Asian Century is not possible without the two Asian giants having a full and multifaceted relationship, and a settled border is key to this aspiration.

However, if this indeed be the intention, they should be aware that time is not on their side.

Writing in the Global Times in November, Professor Zhang Jiadong, director of Fudan University's Centre for South Asian Studies, noted that the "competition and cooperation between them have already gone beyond land into maritime and other sectors, and have transcended the bilateral realm to reach the regional and international levels".

**INDIA'S SHIFT FROM NON-ALIGNMENT**

Like China, India also is expanding its naval reach. Last year, it signed an agreement with Oman for naval facilities, securing a perch near the key Strait of Hormuz. At the other end of the sea lane, it is rapidly fortressing the Andaman and Nicobar chain of islands.

What is more, India increasingly appears ready to drop its centrist position in global politics. Logistics arrangements, intense joint training – the US conducts more military exercises with India than with any other power – and rising interoperability of their equipment suggest that New Delhi is inexorably moving closer into the Western camp led by the US. It is a policy that has survived several government changes.

Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale acknowledged last week at the Raisina Dialogue that today's India is not the same as it was in the 1950s and 1960s, when the Nehruvian ideology of non-alignment was paramount in its external dealings.

"In the early part of our time, it worked with non-alignment," Mr Gokhale said. "We have moved beyond that. I think at this stage, we are aligned, but the alignment is issue-based. It is not ideological. That gives us the capacity to be flexible, gives us the capacity to maintain our decisional autonomy."

The top Indian foreign ministry official said he was looking at forging closer relations with the Group of Twenty – which should be a "global rule-making partnership" – and the Indo-Pacific partnerships.

It is in Beijing's interest to give New Delhi maximum incentive to sustain its centrist, non-aligned instincts.

Aside from sound strategic reasons, including fear of encirclement, there is the economy to think about. Chinese firms need external markets such as India's to continue to thrive, especially as the home market slows.

India, too, stands to gain; from Chinese investments in industry to infrastructure, access to its markets and higher tourist arrivals – India currently gets a negligible amount of the 145 million or so Chinese who travel overseas.

A settled boundary also helps the national budget, reducing the pressure to maintain a huge standing army and thus allowing more funds to flow towards critically needed health, education and environmental projects.

Trouble is, there seems no reasonable chance of seeing a border settlement in the next decade, or even longer. The two, as the respected Indian China-watcher Srikanth Kondapalli noted recently, do not even agree on the length of the border and the area of the territories in dispute.

Still, it is worth making one last effort to find a border solution, and speedily. Beyond may be too late.



# Giving security officers peace of mind, despite the penalties

Security officers now face possible jail terms and fines if caught sleeping on the job or breaking the rules. Their vital role may justify these penalties, but more can be done to help them do their job better and to keep Singapore safe.



Hariz Baharudin

For most jobs, when an employee commits lapses such as sleeping while he's on duty or turning up drunk, investigations are likely to be conducted internally to determine the appropriate punishment, if necessary.

For professionals like lawyers and medical practitioners, they, too, have industry councils to probe errant behaviour and mete out punishments such as warnings.

Serious offenders would be referred to a disciplinary tribunal that can strike them off or make them face criminal investigation.

Now contrast this against the plight of the 47,000 private security officers here. There does not seem to be such an internal process for them.

From Jan 1, those caught slacking, sleeping on the job or breaking the rules will be dealt with under the law and can face a maximum fine of \$2,000 and a jail term of not more than three months.

The move to introduce the penalty regime, coupled with the job's labour-intensive and relatively low-paying nature, has raised questions on why this group has come under scrutiny.

With their 12-hour shifts for five or even six days a week, some under the hot sun, security officers say they cannot help dozing off sometimes.

A security officer who wanted to be known as Mr Hidir, 35, told The Straits Times that he and his colleagues now go to work afraid that a moment's shut-eye can lead to time behind bars.

"We keep warning each other to stay awake and don't close our eyes.

"What if someone takes a picture of you sleeping and sends it to the police? You can get locked up. What kind of job is that?" he said.

The ST report on Dec 23 about the changes was widely discussed, shared more than 1,300 times and attracted nearly 300 comments, with some asking if the penalties were excessive.

## A VITAL SECURITY ROLE

A spokesman for the Ministry of Home Affairs told ST last month that it was strengthening the penalties for selected breaches that pose a risk to public safety and security to "further underscore the importance of upholding professional standards in the security industry and deter errant behaviour".

Home Affairs and Law Minister K. Shanmugam also said last November that private security officers play key roles as they are often the first line of defence.

Apart from condominiums and commercial buildings, these officers may also be guarding ministries and statutory board offices.

The security officer's code of conduct is contained in the Schedule of the Private Security Industry (Conduct) Regulations, which allows the police to take action against errant officers who breach this code.

Industry leaders largely welcomed the move, saying it plugged a void that has allowed

security officers who flout the rules at one firm to move to another.

They also say the move would help raise the standard of the security industry in Singapore, along with other efforts like the introduction of the Progressive Wage Model (PWM) for security officers and the launch of the Security Industry Transformation Map (ITM) last year.

The PWM, which pegs wage increases to workers' skill and experience levels, was implemented in the security industry in late 2016 and enhanced in 2017 and last year.

A security officer's minimum basic wage is \$1,175 under the PWM.

As he or she fulfils the training requirements for each rung, the officer can go up the wage ladder and eventually have a salary of at least \$1,760 as a senior security supervisor.

Also, under the PWM revisions in 2017, all security officers will be allowed to put in a maximum of only 72 overtime (OT) hours a month from 2021. Before this, security companies applied for OT exemptions so their employees can work past this limit, which led to overworked officers.

Their typical shift pattern is now 12 hours a day, six days a week.

At the launch of the security ITM last year, it was announced that \$10 million will be pumped into the industry over three years to encourage players to be more productive and technologically advanced.

## STRONG MESSAGE

The penalties introduced by law thus should be seen in the context of a wider move to professionalise the private security sector.

They send a strong message that security is of utmost importance, and errant behaviour that compromises it cannot be accepted, said Security Association (Singapore) president Raj Joshua Thomas.

Consequences can be dire if security is not maintained.

A lapse can allow intruders to strike, causing property damage or hurting people.

Officers sleeping on the job are a common bugbear for many clients.

Although there are no statistics, Mr Raj said the problem is "prevalent". This may be due to long hours, overnight shifts and the fact that some security officers hold down two jobs.

Officers going to work drunk is not common but it still remains a problem, he adds.

But these should not tarnish the good work officers put in every day in contributing to Singapore's security.

Most officers, for most hours, put in an honest day's work, said the immediate past president of the Union of Security Employees Singapore (USE) Hareenderpal Singh, who was involved in talks with the Government about the stiffer penalties.

It is just that some "rotten apples" ruin their good name by going to work with the intention of slacking off.

"I've personally come across officers who are demanding when it comes to their site. They don't want to do patrolling, there cannot be a camera in the guardhouse, they want reclining chairs – all these tell me they just want to go to work to sleep," said Mr Hareenderpal.

"No one gets paid to sleep."

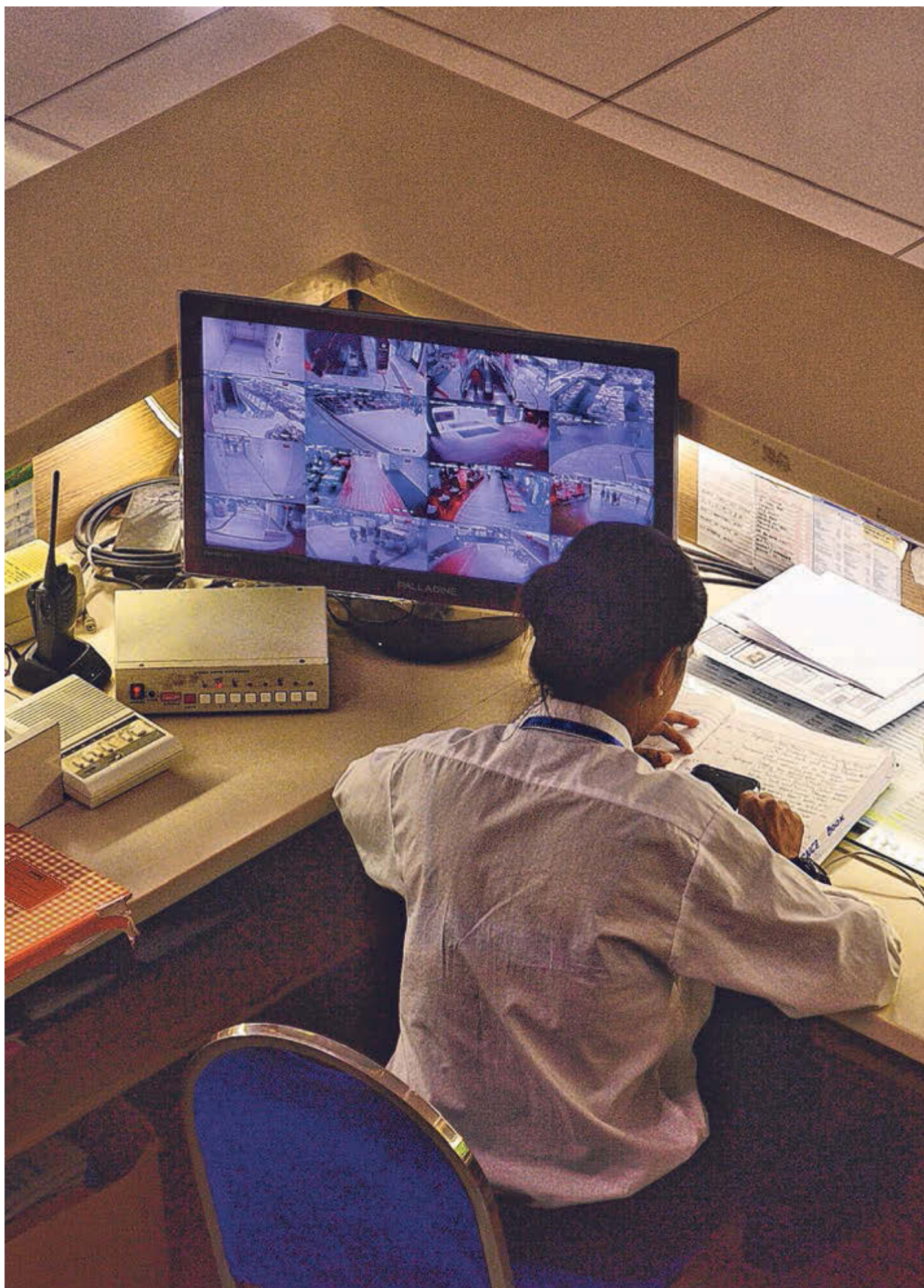
There is a need for the law to step in, as employers' actions are limited to firing or suspending officers.

But these officers can simply move on to another agency.

Said Mr Hareenderpal: "When an officer moves from one agency to another, we don't know his past record, so we don't know if they are good officers or not."

## SAFEGUARDS IN PLACE

Overall, the harsher penalties are a step in the right direction, said observers, but some added that they should come in tandem with



## Penalty regime for private security officers

Private security officers who slack off, sleep on the job or come to work drunk now face tougher punishment.

From Jan 1, security officers who display errant behaviour can be punished by a fine not exceeding \$2,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months. These offences may also be compounded by a fine, in lieu of prosecution.

Before this, there was no law governing punishment for security officers who behave in an unprofessional manner, and those who did not do their job properly would be dealt with by their employer and receive verbal warnings, get suspended or fired. They can also have their licence revoked by the police.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said the security officer's code of conduct is contained in the Schedule of the Private Security Industry (Conduct) Regulations, which allows the police to take action against errant offi-

cers who breach this code.

According to the MHA, the police will adopt a calibrated enforcement approach for these penalties and, generally, first-time offenders will be given warnings or composition fines.

These stricter penalties are the latest in a series of moves that has sought to raise the standard of the security industry in Singapore.

In 2016, the progressive wage model was implemented in the security industry, which pegs wage rises to increases in the skill and experience levels of workers.

Enhancements were made to the model in November in 2017 and 2018.

Last year, the Security Industry Transformation Map was launched, where it was announced that \$10 million would be pumped into the industry over three years to encourage firms to be more productive and technologically advanced.

The security industry, with its two associations and union, could also take the cue from the legal and medical professions by appointing a council or board to regulate itself.

This way, only the most egregious of behaviours or recalcitrant of officers are referred to the law.

Beefing up protection measures to include all security officers, as Mr Zainal had suggested, should also be considered. By protecting all officers from harassment, a clear message would be sent that the authorities are on their side too, and the law is not out to get them.

Work conditions should also change. Currently, 12-hour shifts are the norm, which can cause fatigue.

This is the case as clients insist on seeing security as a staffing issue, where they have to hire a certain number of officers to work for a certain amount of time. If clients move towards outcome-based contracts that leverage technology and reduce the time officers need to clock in, they would not have to work such long hours, thus reducing fatigue levels and chances of dozing off at work.

At the Security Industry Conference last year, Second Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Manpower Josephine Teo said most government agencies will target to adopt outcome-based security contracts by 2020, where possible.

But this is easier said than done.

Mr Raj, who manages his own security firm, said that he has tried to sell contracts with eight-hour shifts to some of his clients, but not many were biting and he had to revert to the norm.

In Parliament, Ms Sun said the committee tasked to transform the security industry encourages security agencies to move towards shorter working hours, where possible.

Like it or not, the law is here to stay. The penalties send a strong message that security cannot be taken lightly. But having industry self-regulation, better harassment protection and shorter working hours will go a long way to give security officers peace of mind to do their job well.

This, in turn, means that the majority of Singaporeans will be kept safer – an outcome worth striving for.

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better protection measures.

Mr Zainal Sapari, assistant secretary-general of the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), last week urged for a review of the Protection from Harassment Act (Poha) to cover all private security officers, in light of the harsher penalties.

Currently, only officers working in specified places, such as public healthcare and educational institutions, and those who work in public spaces, such as bus interchanges and railway premises, are covered by the Poha.

The Act provides civil and criminal recourse for victims of harassment. It also helps victims of alarm or distress, fear, provocation and stalking.

As for the penalty regime, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Home Affairs and National Development Sun Xueling said in Parliament on Monday the punishments are meant to act as a deterrent for errant behaviour and are not part of a "punitive regime".

With the changes, the police now have the flexibility to impose a composition fine on security officers who repeatedly or egregiously breach the code of

conduct, she added.

This could be a better alternative to suspending or revoking their licence, which would take away an officer's ability to do his work.

Ms Sun also gave her assurance that first-time offenders will generally be given warnings.

The USE has also given its assurance that punishments will be doled out responsibly.

Mr Zainal told ST that NTUC supports USE's approach of responsible enforcement.

Said Mr Zainal, who is also chairman of the Security Tripartite Cluster: "It is important that security officers, who do an honest day's work, should not be implicated through misrepresentations.

"As such, we would strongly encourage security officers to be union members so that the union can represent them should there be allegations of misconduct."

## WHAT NEXT?

The industry itself can also step up its self-policing. For a start, it can put together a blacklist of officers who have a record of errant behaviour, as Mr Hareenderpal mentioned.

Currently, 12-hour shifts are the norm for security officers, which can cause fatigue. But if clients move towards outcome-based contracts that leverage technology and reduce the time officers need to clock in, they would not have to work such long hours, thus reducing fatigue levels and chances of dozing off at work.  
ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE



# Can Asean cope with the ‘trade war’?

The regional grouping must brace itself for both the economic and strategic fallout from the US-China ‘trade war’

**Bilahari Kausikan**

Asean is facing a prolonged period of heightened United States-China competition and, hence, of greater uncertainty. The most obvious manifestation of this new phase in relations between the two nations is the so-called “trade war”.

The term is something of a misnomer: Trade is only the instrument; the objective is strategic competition. From 1972, when the US and China re-established relations, to the global financial crisis of 2009, the overall emphasis of the relations was on engagement. The two countries will continue to work together selectively. But, as Vice-President Mike Pence’s speech of last Oct 4, the National Security Strategy of December 2017 and the National Defence Strategy of January last year clearly signalled, the overall emphasis of the relationship is now on strategic competition.

China was clearly caught on the back foot by the new approach. Towards the end of the Hu Jintao administration and far more shrilly under Mr Xi Jinping’s leadership, Chinese foreign policy took on a triumphalist tone. Beijing seems to have overestimated its own capabilities and began to believe its own propaganda about the US being in inevitable decline. Asean should not make the same mistake.

The new US approach of robust competition will not end with the Trump administration. Neither will the agreement that President Donald Trump and President Xi reached in Argentina substantially change the situation. The new trend had been developing over many years. It was President George W. Bush who first dubbed China a “strategic competitor” almost 20 years ago. The mood of American businesses towards China on intellectual property (IP) and technology theft began to turn sour during the Bush 43 administration. 9/11 was a



In the strategic competition between the United States and China, Asean economies will be closely monitored to ensure that they do not act as a back door for Chinese products to enter the US market. PHOTO: REUTERS

distraction. The subsequent wars in the Middle East gave China a virtually free hand in East Asia. President Barack Obama’s “pivot” or “rebalance” was intended to refocus on China. But Mr Obama had little stomach for competition and his rhetoric was hardly matched by action.

Mr Trump has successfully positioned his administration’s approach to China as an overdue correction to the perceived failures of his predecessors. Even if they do not always agree with his methods, this has resonated positively across the security and defence community, American businesses, as well as human rights and religious freedom advocates.

**Bipartisan consensus**

This broad bipartisan consensus is a new paradigm that no American politician can ignore. Any subsequent presidential candidate will find it difficult to soften China policy without being accused of weakness. In any case, the new legislation that has been put in place with strong bipartisan support to make it difficult for China to acquire US technology, defines a new framework for the relationship that any successor administration will find difficult to change, even if it is so inclined.

The Argentina deal is only a 90-day tactical pause in the implementation of new tariffs. It makes the US look reasonable. The 90-day deadline – not reported within China – dials up the pressure on Beijing to demonstrate that it is serious about addressing US complaints about IP violations and other unfair economic policies.

China has made some gestures. It has introduced a new foreign

investment law with better protection for intellectual property that prohibits forced technology transfer. It has released a “negative list” of sectors that are off limits to foreign businesses to provide greater transparency. China may offer further concessions.

But these gestures have generally been received with scepticism. If a deal is reached at the end of the 90-day pause, it will probably only address tariffs – not technology. Fundamental changes to the Chinese way of doing business and to China’s economy are not likely.

The core of the problem is a fact so obvious as to be often overlooked: China is a communist country – not in its ideology, but in the structure of its political system that is built around a Leninist party that claims absolute dominance over every facet of the economy and society.

Party dominance gives any Chinese business connected to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) a privileged position – in effect, this means every Chinese business because no Chinese business can succeed against the will of the party. It is precisely this privilege that the US and other countries deem unfair. No Chinese leadership will ever compromise on the dominance of the CCP, and Mr Xi has placed greater emphasis on CCP control.

The probability, therefore, is that whatever China is willing or able to do to assuage US concerns will fall short of US expectations and that, after this pause, US pressures on China will resume. Action has already been taken against Huawei and other Chinese tech companies. More action can be expected.

Mr Xi is already facing some internal criticism for having mismanaged the relationship with the US. This does not immediately threaten his position, but is also not a factor that he can ignore. For now, Mr Xi has adopted a conciliatory approach towards the US and its allies. This is unlikely to last.

Since the current conciliatory attitude is probably not going to end US pressures, sooner or later, Mr Xi must act tough. He cannot afford to appear weak by continuing to be conciliatory with no substantive result.

The crucial question is what China will do. Not responding is not an option, and the response is not necessarily only on trade.

At least for now, China is hurting, particularly on the technology front. Growth has slowed as Chinese economic policy is pulled in contradictory directions. The Chinese private sector, which provides more than half of GDP growth, is facing great uncertainty. The Trump administration’s bilateral approach towards trade seems to be working – the FTA with South Korea has been tweaked, the renegotiated North American Free Trade Agreement gives the US a veto over its partners’ trade relationships with China, and Japan has apparently been persuaded to discuss a bilateral trade agreement.

Europe shares many US concerns and is incapable of dealing with a resurgent Russia on its own. Europe must, therefore, ultimately accommodate US concerns no matter how distasteful it finds the Trump administration. There is thus no incentive for the US to change tack, and every reason for the US to pressure its partners to follow its approach towards China.

Why should Asean be exempted?

**Asean’s situation**

Some analysts have speculated that Asean could benefit from the diversion of investments from China. This is possible, but is a short-sighted view that only provides cold comfort. The extent of diversion remains to be seen and may well be less than anticipated. New investments may be postponed. But no serious business can afford to forswear the China market, as Japan’s unsuccessful decades-long search for a viable “China plus one” investment strategy demonstrates. In so far as investment diversion occurs, Asean must expect greater scrutiny.

Asean economies will be closely monitored to ensure that they do not act as a back door for China into the US market. The US will demand that sophisticated economies like Singapore put in place credible and robust safeguards to ensure that sensitive technology does not leak into China. The harsh fact is that the definition of what is “credible”, “robust” and “sensitive” will be primarily American.

Technology is already eroding the cost advantage of widely distributed supply chains. Heightened US-China competition could accelerate such shifts in supply chains and derail Asean’s project of making South-east Asia a common market and common production platform unless it moves more decisively.

Concerns over the security of supply chains also implies that the scrutiny of Asean’s relationship with China will go beyond the purely economic and will involve judgments on the overall autonomy of member states’ foreign and domestic policies.

Since trade is only the instrument of strategic competition, it will become increasingly difficult for Asean member states to neatly separate the economic dimensions of their relationships with China from political and security dimensions.

Their ability to attract high-quality Western investments and keep access to advanced Western technologies will, at least in some measure, be influenced by perceptions of their positions on non-economic issues such as the South China Sea and their ability to resist Chinese influence.

This is particularly so with regard to defence technologies, which are crucial to Singapore. There is no viable alternative to American (and, more generally, Western) defence technology.

All this is a counsel of realism, not of despair. During the Cold War, Asean successfully navigated even more intense and dangerous periods of major power competition when the possibility of war was ever present. The possibility of conflict can never be entirely discounted, but war is currently highly unlikely.

Asean thus ought to be able to cope with the new complexities. It succeeded during the Cold War because the regional grouping did not then lack ambition and courage. The last decade or so has, however, seen a narrowing of Asean’s strategic imagination and a lack of bold leadership. We must understand that the greatest risk under present circumstances is unwillingness to take risks.

• Bilahari Kausikan, a former permanent secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, is chairman of the Middle East Institute at the National University of Singapore. This article first appeared in this month’s issue of Asean Focus, published by the Asean Studies Centre at Iseas-Yusof Ishak Institute.

# How US monetary policy has reined in China

**David Lubin**

Chinese leaders do like their slogans, and where foreign policy is concerned, two have reflected Beijing’s thinking in recent times.

The first is the cautious principle of *tao guang yang hui*, usually rendered in English as “hide your light and bide your time”, which guided Chinese policy for decades after Deng Xiaoping established it in the 1980s. In late 2013, though, President Xi Jinping coined a new slogan to define a more assertive, muscular approach: *fen fa you wei*, or “strive for achievement”.

The drift towards a more assertive foreign policy under Mr Xi has been evident everywhere, from China’s declaration of an air defence identification zone over the East China Sea in late 2013, to the creation of “facts on the ground” in the South China Sea, to

the development of the Belt and Road Initiative.

But recently there have been signs that China might be having second thoughts about its ability to keep striving for achievement.

Mr Xi’s government seems clearly to have entered concession-making mode in its relations with the United States, and some prominent Chinese academics have begun questioning whether China has been guilty of strategic overstretch. For example, Professor Yan Xuetong, a doyen of Chinese foreign-policy scholarship, has recently argued that Mr Xi has gone too far, and that China should limit its ambitions to a narrower, regional sphere. Another Beijing-based expert, Professor Shi Yinong, calls for “strategic retrenchment” in Chinese foreign policy.

An easy explanation for this Chinese shift towards retrenchment is US President Donald Trump, who has applied his own brand of

assertiveness to the US-China relationship, with the apparent support of the entire American political class and much of Europe’s, too. Confronted by pushback from the West, China is unsurprisingly warier of pushing forward.

But China’s current caution also owes much to the fragility of its economic performance. As anyone who has recently travelled to Beijing will tell you, the sense of economic pessimism there has rarely been as tangible as it is now.

To a degree, sagging Chinese growth is a self-induced problem. Since Mr Xi’s declaration in 2017 that financial stability is a national security concern, risk-taking by local governments and the financial sector has generally been frowned upon. Because these actors have been the two main engines of China’s growth in the past 10 years, risk aversion among provincial officials and financiers has naturally sapped energy from the economy.

Yet there is another under-noticed source of China’s economic fragility: the capital account of its balance of payments. Since 2014, when China’s foreign reserves began to fall from their US\$4 trillion (S\$5.4 trillion) peak (to US\$3 trillion today), the authorities have been nervous about the damage excessive capital outflows might inflict on China’s economic self-confidence and global role.

In any emerging economy, there is an important connection between the health of the capital account and that of the domestic economy. If money is voting with its feet, how can anyone expect domestic confidence to be strong?

Furthermore, the most important single driver of capital flows in and out of any emerging economy is the state of US monetary conditions.

Loose US monetary policy in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis pushed capital towards China and other developing countries.

That’s what helped reserves grow to US\$4 trillion in the first place: the US Federal Reserve’s “quantitative easing” made it profitable for Chinese firms to borrow dollars and sent investors on a global quest for yield, so money flowed to China.

Conversely, the progressive tightening of US monetary conditions over the past five years, has undeniably helped to suck dollars away from China, causing the country to lose reserves and self-confidence.

This is partly because Chinese companies tend to repay debt when the dollar is strengthening and the cost of servicing dollar liabilities goes up. In addition, foreign portfolio investors are less willing to buy Chinese government bonds when the China-US interest differential narrows, as it has in recent months.

The main reason why reserves haven’t fallen below US\$3 trillion,

which would make Chinese policymakers even more nervous, is the network of controls on capital outflows introduced in late 2016 and early 2017. But the controls may not be completely watertight: the history of capital flows tells us that when money wants to leave a country, it will.

A fragile capital account, and the economic self-doubt it can create, are hardly strong foundations for aggressive Chinese foreign policy.

The next time Mr Trump feels like excoriating Fed chairman Jerome Powell for tightening monetary policy too quickly, he might pause to consider the role that higher US rates and a stronger dollar have played in taming China’s self-confidence. A dovish Fed is a gift to Beijing.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

• David Lubin is head of Emerging Markets Economics at Citi and an associate fellow at Chatham House.





US Senate Democrats with photographs of furloughed federal workers during a press conference urging President Donald Trump to reopen the government outside the US Capitol in Washington on Wednesday. According to the writer, authoritarian leaders often argue that liberal democracies are chaotic, undependable and prone to failure – precisely the message that the American government shutdown sends. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

# China and Russia the big winners of US govt shutdown

Hal Brands

As the partial government shutdown drags on, the political cost is mounting for the White House, and the domestic consequences – from uninspected food to long airport security lines – are accumulating. There is also a widely overlooked problem: The shutdown is taking a toll on United States foreign policy.

With global concerns about the stability of the US government rising and liberal democracy being challenged by capitalist authoritarianism, the shutdown is one more sign of a political dysfunction that America can little afford.

It is true that compared to previous shutdowns, this one is having relatively few day-to-day effects on American statecraft. In 2013, then President Barack Obama cancelled a key diplomatic trip to the Asia-Pacific because of the Obamacare shutdown, leading to worries that the US was forfeiting its leadership in the region.

This time around, most of the major departments and agencies that make up the national security establishment – particularly the Pentagon and the intelligence community – had already received their full budgets for the fiscal year

and have kept operating with minimal or no disruption.

The State Department has been significantly affected: 42 per cent of domestic employees and 26 per cent of those stationed abroad are furloughed. Others – presumably including those who staffed Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s recent trip to the Middle East – are working without pay.

It is already a time of low morale at the department, and this hardly helps. Still, the major muscle movements of US diplomacy have not yet been disrupted – any more than has become the norm during the Trump era, at least.

So where is the foreign policy damage? In the realm of symbolism, because this breakdown of American governance is occurring in two contexts that give it global significance.

The first is surging international concern about the stability and basic functionality of the US government.

Countries around the world are always trying to measure those qualities, because international peace and security depend on them.

Yet American political dysfunction has been on the rise for decades, and over the past two years in particular, the world has witnessed an alarmingly erratic

turn in US policy.

A president who threatens war by tweet and reverses policy on a dime, unprecedented turnover among top foreign policy advisers, and alarmingly high levels of infighting and leaking are standard in the Trump administration.

In recent weeks, there have been duelling statements about whether and how the US is withdrawing from Syria, and duelling indications from President Donald Trump about whether Washington will hand the counter-ISIS fight over to Turkey or devastate that country’s economy. Amid all this came the resignation of Mr James Mattis, the secretary of defence in whom many

**While China is pursuing a trillion-dollar geo-economic project in the Belt and Road initiative, and Russia is re-emerging as the key player in the Middle East, the US cannot even keep its government open.**

US allies and partners placed so much confidence.

The longest shutdown in US history, triggered by the whim of a president increasingly captive to the most radical parts of his base, can only worsen the growing doubts among allies and friends about whether America can still be counted upon.

Then there is the second context: the intensifying “contest of systems” between liberal democracy and capitalist authoritarianism.

The US rivalries with Russia and especially China are not just about military power and diplomatic influence.

They are about which system of government can best meet the needs of its people and operate effectively on the global stage.

America’s competitors have been quite explicit about this. In 2017, President Xi Jinping advertised China’s system – which blends a partially free market with authoritarian political control – as “a new option for other countries and nations” around the world.

The US has some inherent advantages in this contest, especially that its political system is far more open, inclusive and transparent.

Yet authoritarian leaders often argue that liberal democracies are chaotic, undependable and prone to failure – precisely the message that the shutdown sends.

While China is pursuing a trillion-dollar geo-economic project in the Belt and Road Initiative, and Russia is re-emerging as the key player in the Middle East, the US cannot even keep its government open.

The Trump administration has promised to make America respected again; it has touted its willingness to engage in great-power competition. It might start by realising the damage – symbolic but real – this shutdown has caused. BLOOMBERG

• Hal Brands is the Henry Kissinger Distinguished Professor at Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies.

# The damage shutdown battles do to the US economy

Noah Smith

For months now, commentators and economists have been warily eyeing the US economy and asking what will cause the next recession.

Risky corporate debt seemed to be building up in the system, but with profits robust and interest rates low, servicing the debt didn’t seem to be a problem. The Federal Reserve raised rates by a modest amount, but signalled that it did not have much appetite for future increases.

President Donald Trump’s trade war didn’t seem to be having much effect yet. Then came the government shutdown.

In an attempt to force Congress to build a southern border wall, Mr Trump has caused about 800,000 government workers to be furloughed, or in some cases work without pay. Admittedly, that is not a huge number of workers – only about 0.5 per cent of the labour force. And those workers are slated to receive back pay once the shutdown ends.

But while they’re not earning money, it’s much harder for them to make payments on their credit card debt, mortgages and cars, not to mention rent and grocery bills. And in the meantime, many government services are simply not being provided. For example, the Transportation Security Administration is struggling to perform security screenings for air travel, leading to long lines and congestion. The loss of those services will undoubtedly gum up the wheels of the American economy.

In addition to those 800,000 workers, a much larger number of government contractors is going without pay. The shutdown is reducing payments to contractors by about US\$245 million (\$333 million) a day, or about 0.4 per cent of daily gross domestic product.

Some estimates put the number of workers who will be affected at more than 4 million – and unlike government employees, contractors won’t receive back pay once the shutdown ends.

Together, those 4 million contractors and the 800,000 furloughed employees constitute about 3 per cent of the country’s labour force. That number is heading into territory that could have macroeconomic implications – for comparison, the increase in unemployment in the typical recession is usually about 2 per cent to 4 per cent.

Although furloughed workers and unpaid contractors are not quite the same as unemployment, the macroeconomic spillovers might be comparable. But the real damage to the economy could come not from cutbacks by workers, but from reduced investment by companies.

Private investment tends to be more volatile than either consumption or GDP; in good times it soars, and in bad times it plunges. Companies might delay investment due to regulatory disruptions – already there are ominous signs.

Thanks to the lack of

government workers to grant regulatory approval, new products from aircraft to beer and trucks can’t be released. That uncertainty will almost certainly give companies pause about investing.

If anxieties about the decline in demand due to the shutdown make firms even more reluctant to invest, the result could be that many businesses will stampede for the exits. And since many businesses serve other businesses, a lack of investment could quickly ripple through the supply chain.

A general slowdown in business activity would result, with the attendant layoffs, pay freezes and cuts – in other words, a recession.

Economists Scott Baker, Nicholas Bloom and Steven Davis have tried to measure the public’s uncertainty about the course of government policy by analysing the text of news stories. They found spikes in their index were often followed by recessions.

Of course, it is not always clear whether erratic policies hurt the economy, or whether a slowing economy makes the public worry more about policy. But either way, it’s concerning when Baker et al.’s index rises to unusually high levels. Figures for January aren’t available yet, but in December, the index was rising ominously: And this is just the United States.

If the rest of the world starts to worry, the troubles Mr Trump is creating could go global.

Mr Trump’s record shutdown is the latest in a long, frightening trend of US politicians intentionally creating government dysfunction in order to force their opponents to accede to their demands.

The government shutdowns of 1995, 1996 and 2013 were harbingers of today’s troubles. But so were the debt-ceiling crises of 2011 and 2013, when Congress threatened to let the country enter into a technical default on its debt if President Barack Obama didn’t meet its demands.

So far, none of these battles has caused a recession. Let’s hope the current shutdown ends before the harm it does to the economy becomes too severe.

But just because the US has managed to dodge several bullets doesn’t mean that its leaders should keep firing more bullets. Eventually, it seems likely that businesses consumers and other countries will decide that the US is not the bastion of predictability and stability it once was. And the loss of that confidence will be very bad news for the US economy. BLOOMBERG

**Thanks to the lack of government workers to grant regulatory approval, new products from aircraft to beer and trucks can’t be released. That uncertainty will almost certainly give companies pause about investing.**

# The shrinking of Great Britain

Mihir Sharma

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a small country that is about to get even smaller.

I know that this simple statement of fact will nevertheless infuriate many English people – and I do mean English people, not Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish.

Last week, at India’s Raisina Dialogue, the Spanish Foreign Minister said that there were two types of countries in Europe: countries that are small and countries that do not know that they are small.

Aside from the English, no Europeans in the audience were upset at the French.

We know that Britain is about to

get smaller because, as the consequence of its inability to resolve its own internal political contradictions, it looks increasingly likely that it will crash out of Europe with no deal a few weeks from now.

Prime Minister Theresa May and her withdrawal agreement have been delivered the biggest parliamentary defeat in recent British history; this, as European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has pointed out, raises the “risk of a disorderly withdrawal”.

Mrs May has ruled out another referendum, but this is more than just her failure.

After all, even if somehow Mr Jeremy Corbyn’s Labour Party manages to unseat her, Labour’s approach to Europe is as predicated on fantasies as Mrs May’s.

Mr Corbyn is on record as saying he wants a customs union with the

European Union that allows Britain to negotiate its own trade deals; this is, quite simply, impossible.

It reflects a notion of British indispensability that nobody outside England shares.

The British can blame no one but themselves. While they’ve never been enthusiastic Europeans, their decision to be the first country to withdraw from the EU is revealing of a basic inability to grasp their vastly diminished place in the world.

That they are a member of the United Nations Security Council means little; that reflects merely the power that the British Empire had in 1945, not the UK’s power today.

Nor is being a nuclear-weapons state much of a big deal any more: Such basket cases as North Korea have the bomb.

Most of Britain’s foreign policy

influence grows out of its loyalty to the US, and Britons’ disproportionate cultural influence derives from the fact that they happen to speak the same language as the world’s sole cultural superpower.

I say this not just as someone often accused of Anglophilia but also as a citizen of India – one of the very few countries that believes, according to polling organisation YouGov, that Britain is individually more important than either Germany or France.

Even so, there will be no preferential trade deals for a post-Brexit Britain from New Delhi unless more Indians are allowed to work in Britain. This is not, of course, something that Brexit’s Little Britain will permit.

Countries that were once powerful have to work hard to realise they no longer are. Some, like France, have understood that they can hold on to some of their past glory through shaping and guiding a larger collective. Others abandon the quest altogether and find fulfilment elsewhere.

I write this column from Vienna,

an imperial capital grander even than London and one that has also been long without an empire to rule. Austria’s capital, unlike Britain’s, has come to terms with its new status.

A profoundly liveable city, it prospers as Western Europe’s bridgehead in the east, and it has an easy pride in its history of intellectual innovation and artistic excellence.

Two great art exhibitions were on display this January. In one, the Kunsthistorisches Museum gathered Bruegels from across the world, in unspoken memory of a time four centuries past when the word of a Viennese emperor was law in the painter’s native Antwerp.

In another, the work of the artist and designer Koloman Moser was recalled, alongside the time when Vienna invented gracious, multi-ethnic middle-class living. Here, it is easy to remember that a legacy of greatness is just that – a legacy.

Both Moser and the Habsburg Empire died 100 years ago and nobody in Austria pretends otherwise.

By contrast, Britain’s cultish devotion to its past so warps its present that you might be forgiven for thinking that Winston Churchill was still alive and editing The Spectator.

Perhaps the fact that London is still in a way an imperial centre has allowed the fantasy of British greatness to persist. But, the empire London now serves is a very different one from those of the past and lies beyond any one nation’s control: It is the empire of finance, which depends upon the approval of others and the impersonal physics of capitalism.

Finance’s power has given Britain the confidence to undercut the basis for finance’s presence in Britain – its status as a gateway to the EU.

Perhaps, somehow, Brexit can still be avoided. But, that would only be the beginning of Britain’s task. It must still seek an identity for itself that is more suited to the role it can realistically play on the world stage. And it must admit that that role will be closer to Spain’s or Austria’s than that of the United States or China. BLOOMBERG



# BIG PICTURE



WEATHER

Windy, with passing showers in the afternoon.  
High 29 deg C Low 24 deg C  
24-hr PSI as of 5pm yesterday: 23 to 44 (Good)



ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR

## Staring art in the face

About 400 photos of Singapore fashion designer Yang Derong dressed in all manner of costumes deck the walls of an exhibition area in the basement of the National Museum.

These images, part of an interactive installation called Face Of The Day, tell a story as a digital visual dialogue over 369 days. Visitors can download an application on their smartphones or

tablets, and then point them at some of the photos, which come to life with the help of augmented reality technology. Face Of The Day is one of seven installations by local and interna-

tional artists on display at various parts of the National Museum, as part of DigiMuse Presents, which runs from today to Feb 17. The showcase is happening during Singapore Art Week.



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# C| BUSINESS



**LUCKIN COFFEE**  
START-UP GOING ALL  
OUT TO UNSEAT  
STARBUCKS IN CHINA C5

## Biggest fall in S'pore exports in over two years

**8.5% decline last month on back of drop in electronic, non-electronic shipments**

**Seow Bei Yi**  
Business Correspondent

Singapore's exports fell 8.5 per cent last month from a year ago – its largest slide in over two years – dragged down by a drop in electronic and non-electronic shipments.

The steep end-of-year decline for non-oil domestic exports (Nodx) followed a 2.8 per cent fall in November, and was in stark contrast to the 2 per cent growth forecast for December by a Bloomberg poll of economists.

This was its worst performance since October 2016, when it dropped 12 per cent year on year.

Analysts say the high base of year-on-year comparison, given the high export numbers in December 2017, had a part to play.

The broad trend for exports appears to be moving downwards, although it is unclear how deep the slide may be, economists added.

DBS senior economist Irvin Seah said: "What is most disconcerting is the 5.7 per cent month-on-month decline (in Nodx)."

"We already had two months of month-on-month dips and if such a trend continues, this points to a dimmer outlook for overall manufacturing as well as the Singapore economy, heading into 2019."

On a month-on-month seasonally adjusted basis, Nodx dropped 5.7 per cent, following November's 4.3 per cent decline.

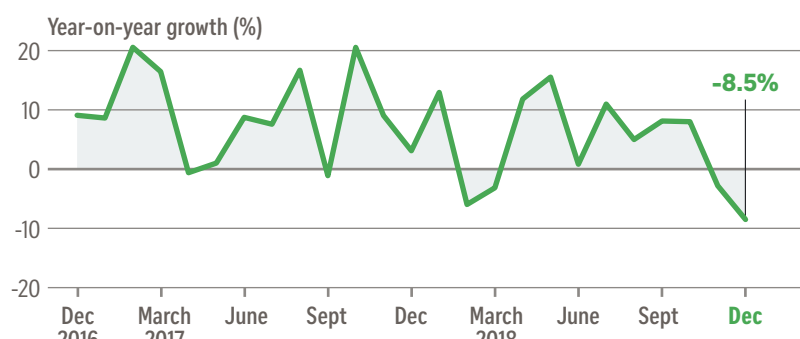
But Mr Seah highlighted that the "downside risk from trade tensions between the United States and China was deepest" in November and December, when falls in exports were seen. "Many importers may have held back their orders while waiting for more clarity on the trade war," he said.

The disparity between predictions and official figures may be down to "mixed signals" from companies that analysts spoke to.

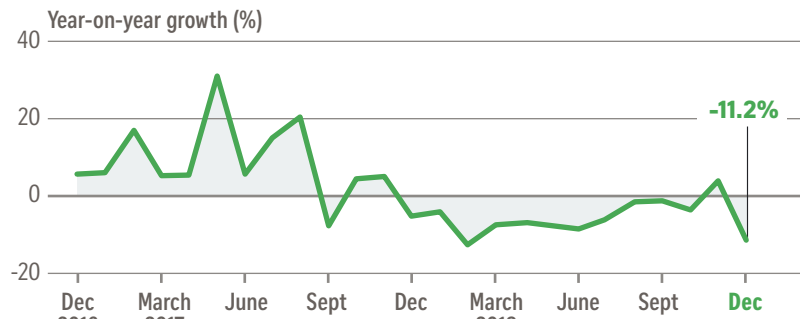
"Some say they are benefiting (from the trade tensions), but others say they see an impact on their orders. The numbers need to be watched very closely," he said.

Singapore's electronic exports, which finally saw growth of 4.3 per cent in November, contracted by

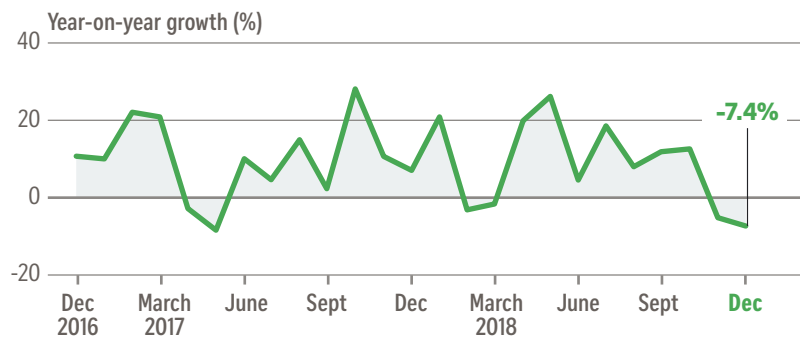
### Sliding exports



### NODX FOR ELECTRONICS



### NODX FOR NON-ELECTRONICS



11.2 per cent last month.

The biggest contributors to this slide were falls in shipments of personal computers, disk media prod-

ucts, and diodes and transistors.

Non-electronic Nodx was down 7.4 per cent, accelerating from the 5.4 per cent drop in the month be-

fore. Falls in shipments of specialised machinery, pharmaceuticals and primary chemicals contributed to the faster pace of decline.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the level of Nodx reached \$14 billion in December, lower than \$14.9 billion the month before.

ING chief economist Robert Carnell said: "All of the components are heavily down. Pharmaceuticals are particularly weak..."

"It has moved from the thing that was holding everything up to being one of the other factors dragging Nodx down."

But he said it is hard to pin the trends on the trade war, noting that exports to Singapore's biggest markets in Asia were down, except those to China.

Exports to most of the top 10 markets declined, except those to the United States and China, led by falls in shipments to Europe, South Korea and Malaysia.

On electronics, he added: "A global lack of demand for new smartphone devices has weighed on the semiconductor and electronics sector."

UOB economist Barnabas Gan noted that exports of pharmaceuticals "unexpectedly fell... bucking its eight consecutive months of expansion and marking its lowest growth print since February 2018".

Seasonally adjusted non-oil retained imports of intermediate goods rose from \$6.4 billion to \$6.5 billion. Total trade grew 1.6 per cent with a 6.1 per cent rise in total imports. Total exports fell 2.5 per cent.

Oil domestic exports dropped 11.1 per cent in December compared with last year – after an 18.9 per cent expansion in the previous month – mainly due to lower sales to Malaysia, China and Indonesia.

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# Firms not investing enough in workers, poll shows

SBF chairman urges businesses to invest in continual training, keep pace with technology

Aw Cheng Wei

Most companies in Singapore are not investing enough in their workers, with only 12 per cent putting money on better training for their employees, according to a survey.

At the same time, almost one-third of them say the task of training their workers in digital skills is a major concern, topped by the lack of suitable manpower with technological expertise, a shortage highlighted by about 40 per cent of the companies.

But the No.1 challenge they face is getting people with the right skills and attitude, with almost two-thirds of large companies as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) saying so.

These findings, released yesterday, are from the latest National Business Survey involving 705 local and foreign companies, of which 88 per cent are SMEs.

It was done from September to December last year for the Singapore Business Federation (SBF).

Responding to the findings, SBF chairman Teo Siang Seng, who runs Pacific International Lines, urged businesses to invest more resources in continual training so that employees can deepen their skills and keep pace with fast-changing technologies.

The continued challenge of getting workers with digital skills last year reflects the focus on innovation, which is increasingly a top priority among local businesses. About one-third of the firms say they are using a greater number of new technologies while more than half have implemented innovations.

Companies see innovation as crucial across all aspects of business, including customer experience (88 per cent), operational processes (88 per cent) business models (87 per cent) and new products or services (85 per cent). Hence, developing digital business capabilities is a key priority this year.

To bolster their innovation drive, almost two-thirds of them want this year's national Budget to offer support to access new and critical technologies.

About half also said they want support for digital adoption and transformation.

Mr Teo, noting the ongoing impact of technological disruption, said the Government can "play an important and deeper role in boosting innovation and building capabilities through advice and funding support, especially in today's challenging environment".

The disruption, when coupled with the uncertain global geopolitical environment, also requires companies to continue to innovate to sharpen their competitive advantage, he added.

The survey shows that worries about the world economy, stoked by US-China trade tensions, may have reduced overseas expansion by companies. About 80 per cent expanded their global footprint in 2017, but only 71 per cent did so last year, largely due to SMEs (81 per cent in 2017 versus 68 per cent last year).

Also, around half of the companies believe the business climate here will stay unchanged, while two in five expect conditions to worsen.

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After an unsuccessful attempt in 2006, BreadTalk made a second foray into India last year, focusing on New Delhi and its satellite cities. It partnered India-based conglomerate Som Datt Group. It spent more than a year researching the market and has also customised its offerings to suit local tastes. PHOTO: BREADTALK

## Companies here showing growing interest in India

Seow Bei Yi  
Business Correspondent

Amid slowing in many economies, more Singapore companies are showing interest in the Indian market, as it takes on greater prominence in the global arena.

Enterprise Singapore, a government agency championing enterprise development, for one, has been supporting more local businesses who want in on the world's fastest growing economy.

Last year, it worked with over 180 companies, helping them in areas such as business-matching, partner facilitation and market support. This was a seven-fold increase from the number it helped in 2015.

But the uptick remains relatively modest, noted Mr Tay Lian Chew, Enterprise Singapore's global markets director for South Asia.

Despite a growing retail scene and the rising affluence of Indian consumers, many here are still unwilling to take the leap, in part due to misconceptions, he added.

These include the sense that consumers may not be "sophisticated" enough for certain products, or may not be willing to pay a premium for their goods and services, said Delhi-based Mr Tay.

For others, India is simply "not on their radar", he said, noting that Singapore companies tend to be more familiar with South-east Asia and China, due to proximity and language respectively.

Yet, a growing number of international companies such as Ikea have flocked to India, in a nod to its growth potential.

In the past two or so years, Singapore companies have shown more interest too, said Mr Tay, adding that China's slowing down may be

### Entertainment and education sectors beckon

Growing demand among Indian consumers for services and experiences, beyond quality goods, has given rise to business opportunities for lifestyle concepts in areas such as entertainment and education, according to Enterprise Singapore global markets director for South Asia Tay Lian Chew.

While these areas are relatively "unexplored" by Singapore companies, some like local education consultancy Duck Learning have already made their move.

After gaining a foothold in Singapore, it established itself in India in 2016 – and now serves more than 50 schools there.

Its work in India includes setting up a learning space in Mumbai's Garodia International School where students use Lego sets in lessons relating to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (Stem).

Duck Learning, Lego Education's exclusive partner in western India, has also provided train-

ing for teachers, especially in education through play.

Its solutions, said chief executive Hozefa Aziz, target students from pre-school to college.

"Stem education is essential for students to develop skills required in the 21st century economy, but it is not yet widespread in Indian schools," he said. "Duck Learning brings Stem education from Singapore... (and) schools in India are keen to incorporate such solutions into their curriculum."

Globally, India's education sector is among the largest, with more than 1.4 million schools, and over 200 million students.

A 2018 Care Ratings report noted India's growing demand for quality education and flagged that it has the world's largest population in the age bracket of three to 23 years as well and, hence, a large "addressable market" for this sector.

Seow Bei Yi



Mr Tay Lian Chew urges Singaporeans to seize the "window of opportunity" to enter the India market early.

leading some to look at alternative markets. He urged Singaporeans to seize the "window of opportunity" to enter the India market early.

With half of India's population of

1.3 billion under the age of 25, he said: "These demographics, coupled with strong economic growth, represent the potential for the formation of a very large middle class, which forms the basis for consumerism."

Organised retail such as in shopping malls, he said, is growing quickly at about 20 per cent per annum and taking root in cities like Mumbai, while online retail is expanding by about 30 per cent a year.

These channels present most opportunities for Singapore, he said.

On the policy front, the replacement of India's many federal and state taxes with a Goods and Services Tax in 2017 has also proved helpful, allowing goods to be distributed more efficiently. Levying taxes at checkpoints could take hours in the past.

Digital adoption is also rising, he said, adding: "With rising affluence, Indian consumers do not just demand better quality goods, but also services and experience. This has given rise recently to opportunities for lifestyle concepts."

He points to lifestyle concepts and food as promising sectors.

Food companies here have shown interest in expanding to India, and a recent tie-up with Indian supermarket chain Foodhall aims to allow 12 Singapore brands to have a shot at selling their products in some of Foodhall stores this year.

Among local food businesses that set up shop in India are bakery chain BreadTalk, which made a second foray last year after an unsuccessful attempt in 2006.

This time, it partnered India-based conglomerate Som Datt Group and is focusing on New Delhi and its satellite cities, after spending over a year researching the market and customising its offerings for local tastes. Following good feedback, it plans to expand its localised flavours to about 10 per cent of the full product range to be launched later this year.

E-commerce can also be an entry point. In 2016 and 2017, Enterprise Singapore supported over 10 electronics brands in selling their products online in India. But Mr Tay stresses the need for research and suggests an asset-light approach. Companies can partner a local distributor but should exercise due diligence to select a suitable party.

"We have seen cases where companies appoint the wrong distributors... only to see their brand value being eroded through sloppy display... eventually exiting the market," he said. "Having a good distributor or franchisee... (is) half the battle won."

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## S'pore online businesses tackling challenges in new markets

Sue-Ann Tan

It will come as no surprise that Singapore's limited market size has made local start-ups the regional leaders when it comes to venturing into new markets.

But as a new survey shows, that sense of adventure can also hit major hurdles when it comes up against foreign business cultures, different payment systems and regulations.

While the poll of 15 nations found that Singapore has the highest percentage of online businesses that sell overseas, it also highlighted the problems they faced.

Take online reservations business Chope. It began its overseas expansion back in 2013 when it entered Hong Kong and soon found that it had to quickly adjust to different banking structures and consumer preferences.

It also had to juggle multiple platforms, which made settlement and financial business very frag-

mented.

Its market now stands at 375,000 customers across eight markets in the Asia-Pacific.

The study was carried out by technology company Stripe in partnership with research firm Viga and released earlier this week.

It polled around 9,000 founders and executives of online businesses across more than 10 industries. Online businesses were defined as companies that accept online payments and have online commerce as their primary source of revenue.

Singapore, alongside Hong Kong, had 88 per cent of online businesses selling to more than just their home market, ahead of other countries like France, China and Japan.

Mr Lee Jun Kiat, vice-president of business development at Chope, said: "Singapore's market size makes it a great location to pilot novel ideas and technologies, but once your business gets past a certain stage, you have to expand overseas to grow."

"This is especially so now, with the burgeoning food tech scene heating competition up."

Despite the globalisation of these businesses, 61 per cent believe that it is more difficult to run an international business now compared with five years ago. This is because of challenges such as regulatory barriers, increasing protectionism and trade tariffs.

Mr Lee said: "The regulatory complexity alone can be incredibly time-consuming and costly, especially to a start-up bootstrapping its growth."

Mr Victor Chow, senior vice-president and commercial head at online grocery and food delivery service Honestbee, agreed: "Some of the challenges we faced were language and cultural barriers, higher costs due to regulations, local competition and immigration restrictions which make it harder to hire talent or bring in talent."

Assistant Professor of Finance Aurobindo Ghosh from the Lee Kong Chian School of Business at

EXPAND OVERSEAS

**Singapore's market size makes it a great location to pilot novel ideas and technologies, but once your business gets past a certain stage, you have to expand overseas to grow.**



MR LEE JUN KIAT, vice-president of business development at Chope.

Singapore Management University said: "Retaliatory measures through tariff and non-tariff barriers also increase the cost of doing business internationally, consequently increasing price and reducing demand."

However, online firms tend to find ways to overcome the challenges to expand overseas.

Mr Chow said leveraging innovation helps businesses to stay ahead of the curve. "Technology has not only been a key enabler for us in the last three years, it also continues to provide us with a ramp to support our future growth," he said.

Mr Zhou Junjie, chief commercial officer at e-commerce platform Shopee, said that quickly building consumers' trust is important in establishing themselves in a new market. "We had to include intentional steps and processes to build trust. For example, we worked with leading logistics and payment partners to build a secure in-app logistics and payments system."

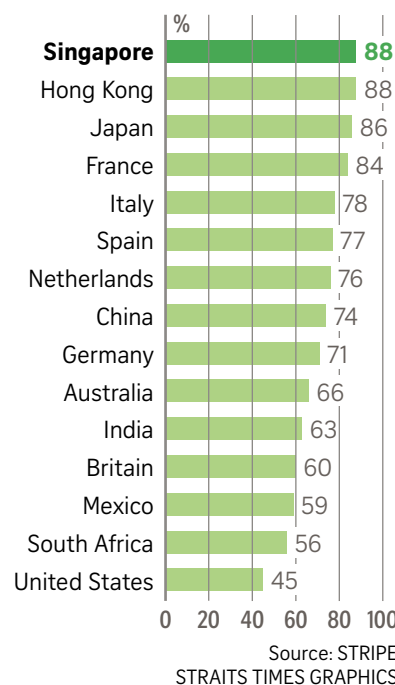
"We also introduced a guarantee where payment to sellers is withheld until the buyers confirm that they have received the order in good condition."

"It is crucial to be able to put in place processes and systems that enable bottom-up growth, and to empower local teams to manage the markets they know best."

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### The proportion of online businesses that sell to markets outside their home country

Singapore ranks among the top in a study by payment services firm Stripe to see how globalised online businesses are.







The value of China's exports unexpectedly fell 4.4 per cent last month after expanding at a rapid clip of more than 14 per cent as recently as October, according to Chinese data this week. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

# China's economic woes take toll on Asia

Region's economies off to rough start for year, amid sharp drop in Chinese trade

Jeffrey Hutton  
Regional Correspondent

Last year, during the run-up to Chinese New Year, Mr Heru Purnomo, founder of Indonesia's biggest live fish exporter, Pulau Mas, could count on a spike in demand to prop up prices, as Chinese families and businesses splashed out on live lobster, grouper and other reef fish as part of elaborate banquets to ring in the new year.

A red coral trout, or snapper, would set a host back US\$65 (S\$88) per kg. This year, it is more like US\$55.

"It's absolutely because the economy there is slowing down," Mr Heru said, referring to China. "After the (Chinese) New Year, prices will drop sharply."

A sharp drop in Chinese trade is taking a bigger-than-expected toll on its Asian neighbours. Imports into the world's second-largest economy contracted 7.6 per cent last month. Taiwan, South Korea and Indonesia have so far this year posted steep declines in their trade data. On Wednesday, Singapore followed suit, posting an unexpected slump in non-oil trade.

The value of China's exports unexpectedly fell 4.4 per cent last month after expanding at a rapid clip of more than 14 per cent as recently as October, according to Chinese data this week.

Taiwan's exports also slumped 3 per cent in December, extending their decline into a second month, while South Korea's exports con-

tracted 1.3 per cent. In October, South Korean exports surged nearly 23 per cent as manufacturers rushed to order components ahead of US tariffs of 25 per cent on more than US\$260 billion of Chinese goods that were slated to go into effect on Jan 1.

But both the United States and China have agreed to a 90-day truce on new tariffs while they negotiate an end to their trade war.

The slower pace of Chinese economic growth – expected to be 6.5 per cent this year – and US tariffs were bad news for the region, said Bloomberg Intelligence banking analyst Diksha Gera.

Australia, Japan, South Korea and the Philippines, each of which relies on China for more than 20 per cent of their exports, were the

most vulnerable, Ms Diksha said. "China's economic slowdown bodes poorly for many Asian countries", she warned in an e-mail. Even so, analysts say, China's troubles would not affect everyone similarly.

That is because, in part, size matters. While Bloomberg expects the rate of gross domestic product (GDP) growth in most Asian economies to slow, countries with big consumer bases may weather the shock of a China slowdown. The Philippines, Japan and Indonesia, where household spending comprises 57 per cent of GDP, will clock GDP growth more or less in line with last year's. India's GDP will accelerate to 7.3 per cent, according to Bloomberg Intelligence.

In Vietnam, which also boasts a young and increasingly affluent consumer base, the economy has been the beneficiary of an ongoing effort among manufacturers to move production of low-margin goods, such as some electronic products and clothing, away from China. The value of Vietnamese exports expanded 6.5 per cent last month.

Another factor determining prospects would be a diversity of trading partners. Singapore's web of free trade agreements, not only with China, but also the US, European Union and others, may help cushion the impact of China's difficulties, said ANZ's head of Asia research Khoon Goh. "We're seeing a contraction in manufacturing activity, particularly in North Asian economies such as Taiwan and South Korea," he said ahead of Wednesday's trade results.

How well the region's economies perform could also depend on governments' and central banks' latitude to splash out on infrastructure or cut interest rates respectively to stimulate spending.

Indonesia's five interest-rate hikes last year, which were intended to shore up the value of the rupiah, have provided room for the central bank to lower borrowing costs, Mr Goh said.

China's December GDP figures, expected later this month, and the possible resolution of its trade war with the US would determine prospects for the region, Mr Goh said.

But there is no denying that 2019 has had a rough start.

"We were expecting a slowdown in trade but not an outright contraction," Mr Goh said, referring to results for most Asian countries. "Conditions are tougher than what we were expecting."

## MANUFACTURING CONTRACTION

We're seeing a contraction in manufacturing activity, particularly in North Asian economies such as Taiwan and South Korea.



KHOON GOH, ANZ's head of Asia research.

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# Sias chief calls for answers as Hyflux debt revamp drags on

Investors looking forward to Hyflux's second round of town hall meetings today may have to wait a little longer before a detailed survival plan is laid out.

Hyflux does not appear to be ready yet to present a restructuring plan to its retail investors, as discussions with various stakeholders are ongoing.

Instead, the water-cleaning company's perpetual and preference share holders can expect to receive another status update, as well as a look at its latest restructuring timetable during today's sessions.

Hyflux had said it hopes to reach a deal with its creditors via a court-sanctioned scheme of arrangement by April. Its court-sanctioned debt moratorium lasts till April 30.

Yesterday, Mr David Gerald, who heads the Securities Investors Association (Singapore), urged Hyflux chairman and chief executive Olivia Lum to put more skin in the game. He said: "As Sias under-

stands, Hyflux investors would like to hear from the Hyflux majority shareholder as to what sort of involvement there will be, if any, from her in this restructuring exercise and if not, why not? Going by the recent other successful restructuring exercises, affected investors have also seen the majority shareholder providing capital to some extent to demonstrate alignment of interest with the investors."

Sias helped Hyflux to arrange today's town hall meetings, its second since it filed for court protection in May last year. After the first town hall meetings in July, a consortium comprising Salim Group and Medco Group tabled a deal to inject and lend \$560 million into Hyflux in exchange for a 60 per cent stake in the company once it has settled all its debts.

"Investors rightfully expect that the company has done the necessary due diligence to ensure that the best deal is achieved for them,"

Mr Gerald said. "Hyflux retail investors are expecting to hear from the company (today) to what extent they can recover their investments and on what terms and within what period."

On Nov 23, Hyflux said that it would need up to two months to sound all stakeholder before putting a viable restructuring plan to creditors' vote. That comment came following media reports that certain financial creditors and medium-term note holders had rejected outright a preliminary plan floated by Hyflux's financial adviser EY, partly because it called for Hyflux's current management to be allocated a 3 per cent stake in the enlarged share capital of the company post-revamp.

That's an implied equity value of around \$20 million for the management team, even though the same team has run Hyflux since it began to perform poorly from 2009, wrote Debtwire.

## ADVERTORIAL

An Investor Education  
Article by SIAS

# Securityholders' Rights – In a Restructuring Exercise

Recently there has been a series of restructuring of companies running into serious financial difficulties and unable to meet their payment obligations. In this situation, investors of various classes do not fully appreciate their rights and implications resulting from the reorganisation.

Securityholders should be aware that their contractual rights can be varied through a scheme of arrangement under the Companies Act.

A reorganisation process can take place out of court (referred to as a "consensual restructuring") or under the court's supervision.

A court-supervised reorganisation process will frequently result in a scheme of arrangement being proposed, usually by the company, to stakeholders (including securityholders) to consider, and if thought fit, approve. The scheme is essentially the deal that is being offered to stakeholders in replacement of rights they are asked to give up and can take any form. The scheme will become binding on all stakeholders if two things happen:

- the requisite majorities of each class of stakeholders approving the scheme that is proposed (before the Court allows the company to hold such a meeting, the classes of the stakeholders and the scheme terms will be reviewed by the Court); and
- the Court sanctioning the scheme.

During a court-supervised reorganisation process, a temporary stay (moratorium) may also be granted by the Court, restraining securityholders (via their representatives, if any) or any other party from commencing any enforcement action against the company. This is done before a scheme is proposed or permission is sought from the Court to hold a meeting for the creditors to consider the scheme. The moratorium ensures that until the scheme is proposed, no one stakeholder can steal a march on others through enforcement actions against the company and its assets.

When the company puts forth a scheme of arrangement, stakeholders should compare their position under the scheme of arrangement against the likely scenario if there is no scheme. In most instances, the likely alternative scenario would be enforcement by various creditors scrambling to seize assets and thereafter, liquidation.

As such, when making an assessment of any proposed scheme of arrangement, and the variation to their existing rights thereunder, holders of securities should consider (a) the status of their securities and (b) the ranking of their claims in a liquidation or enforcement scenario.

Below is a general outline of the status, rights and ranking of claims of securityholders in a liquidation scenario.

## What are the characteristics of my securities?

### Secured and unsecured obligations

- Secured securityholders may enforce their rights against specific assets over which they have been granted security.
- Unsecured securities will not have recourse to any specific assets.

### Junior (or subordinated) and senior (or unsubordinated) obligations

- Generally, subordination is the process by which a party is placed in a lower priority for the collection of its debt than another party.
- This ranking of claims is contractually agreed under the terms and conditions of the securities.
  - The party to whom another creditor is subordinated has a "senior obligation", whereas the subordinated party is commonly said to have a "junior obligation".
    - For example, notes are usually senior obligations ranking in priority of payment to perpetual securities and preference shares (each, a junior obligation). In turn, notes may rank equally to or be subordinated to other obligations that the company may have, such as bank debt.
  - The terms and conditions of different securities may provide that they rank equally among themselves.
    - For example, while preference shareholders are generally subordinated to perpetual securityholders, perpetual securityholders can contractually agree to rank equally with preference shareholders. This means that if there are \$100 of assets left for distribution to the perpetual securityholders and the preference shareholders, that \$100 is to be divided in accordance to how many lots each holder has regardless of whether the holder is of preference shares or perpetual securities.
- Senior obligations rank equally among themselves and all other present and future unsubordinated obligations of the company.
- Senior obligations rank in priority to the subordinated (or junior) obligations of the company.

## What rights do securities grant the securityholder in a liquidation scenario?

### Secured and unsecured obligations

- In a liquidation scenario, secured securityholders will have prior claims to the assets that constitute their collateral and such assets will be assigned to them. Unsecured securityholders will participate on an equal basis with all other holders of unsecured debt in the remaining assets of the company.
- Secured securityholders are free to enforce their rights against the assets that constitute their collateral in a liquidation.
  - Proceeds from the secured assets will be applied towards full settlement of the secured obligations. Any surplus will be applied toward the unsecured obligations.
  - If the secured assets are not sufficient to fully discharge the secured obligations, the portion of the secured claim remaining unsatisfied will then be unsecured and paid out of the common pool of assets (if any) available to all unsecured creditors.

### Junior and senior obligations

- In a liquidation scenario, the rights-of-payment of holders of senior securities (principal plus accrued and unpaid interests, distributions or dividends) will rank ahead of the junior or subordinated securities and ordinary shareholders.
- Similarly, the rights-of-payment of holders of subordinated obligations will, in a liquidation scenario, be:
  - subordinated to the prior payment in full of all claims of senior securityholders
  - equal to the company's equally-ranked subordinated obligations
    - By way of illustration, should perpetual securityholders contractually agree to rank equally with preference shareholders at all times and in liquidation, the rights of payment of the perpetual securityholders will be the same as the rights-of-payment of the preference shareholders. In the event of a shortfall of funds, perpetual securityholders may lose all or some of their investments or will not receive a full return of the principal amount or any unpaid amounts due under the perpetual securities similar to equally ranked preference shareholders.
  - in priority to the lower-ranked subordinated obligations and ordinary shareholders

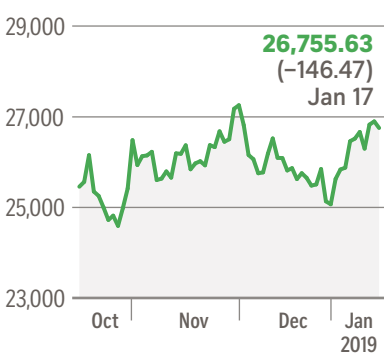
## Where do ordinary shareholders stand in a restructuring exercise?

- In a liquidation scenario, the assets remaining after payment of all obligations (including notes, perpetual securities and preference shares) will be distributed among the shareholders in proportion to the number of shares held.
- If a scheme of arrangement involves the issuance of shares, transfer of major assets or dilution of shares as part of the restructuring, ordinary shareholders are likely to be involved in the process since their approval would be required for the company to implement such aspects of the restructuring.





Hang Seng



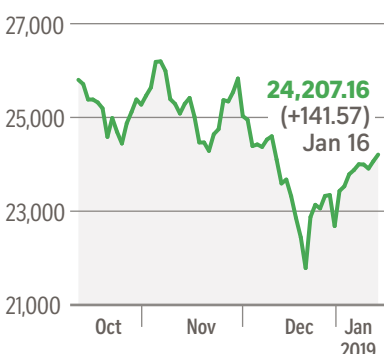
Shanghai Comp



Nikkei 225



Dow Jones



BullsAndBears

# STI weighed down by weaker export data

## Investors turn cautious with fall in exports in Dec for 2nd straight month

Leila Lai

A fall in exports in December for the second month running spooked investors and dragged down the local market.

The news hit in the morning and sent the Straits Times Index (STI) heading south for most of the day before closing at 3,214.44, off 0.45 per cent or 14.67 points.

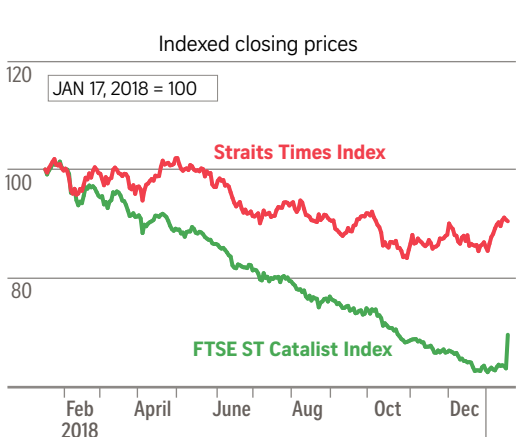
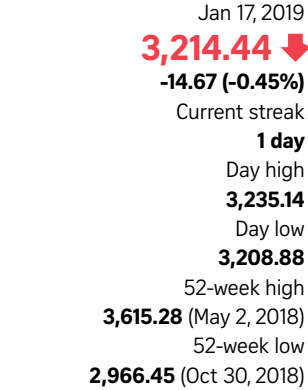
Turnover was 1.7 billion shares worth \$961.41 million with losers outnumbering gainers 206 to 167.

Economists had forecast non-oil domestic exports (Nodx) to rebound 2 per cent in December, but were disappointed with a 8.5 per cent year-on-year decline instead, on the back of weaker performances in just about every sector.

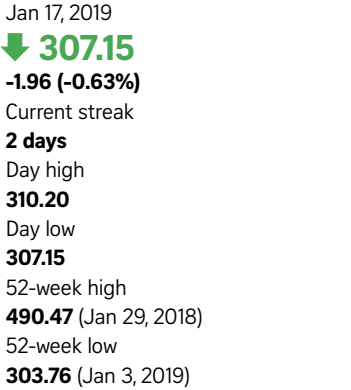
No single geopolitical event like the United States-China trade war fully explains the overall decline either, said ING chief economist and head of research for Asia-Pacific Robert Carnell, adding that Singapore's exports to the two countries actually improved.

He noted that the data "almost certainly will result in a downward revision" to ING's 1.6 per cent quarter-on-quarter estimate for the fourth quarter and may lower its full-year growth estimate of 3.3 per cent for 2018. ING may also ease its full-year GDP forecast for 2019 from the current

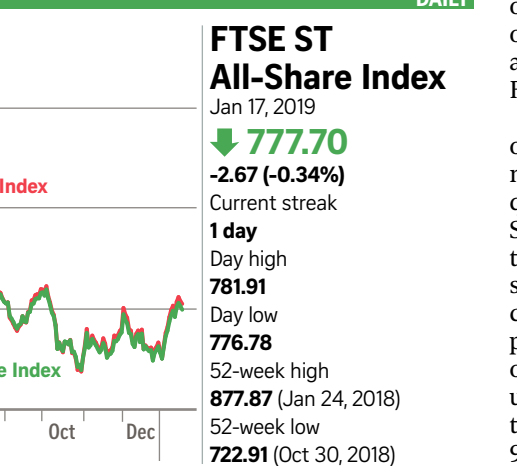
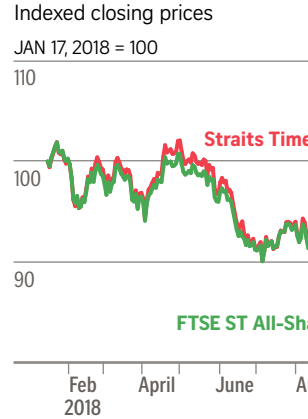
Straits Times Index



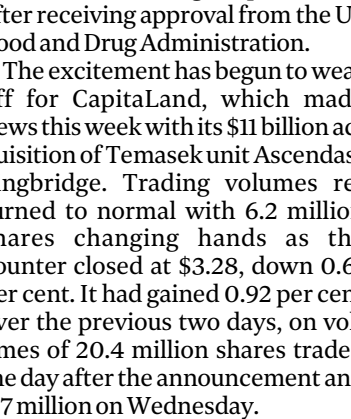
FTSE ST Catalyst Index



FTSE ST All-Share Index



FTSE ST



rent 2.5 per cent, Mr Carnell said.

Ezion Holdings led active trading for a third straight day, with 77 million shares traded. The firm gained 2 per cent to 5.1 cents. ThaiBev ended its nine-day winning streak, down 1.38 per cent to 71.5 cents on volume

of about 14 million shares.

The usually thinly traded QT Vascular saw 17.1 million shares change hands, bumping its price up 14.29 per cent to 0.8 cent. The medtech firm announced on Wednesday that it is expanding an ongoing study for

one of its products to include the use of an additional surgical procedure, after receiving approval from the US Food and Drug Administration.

The excitement has begun to wear off for CapitaLand, which made news this week with its \$11 billion acquisition of Temasek unit Ascendas-Singbridge. Trading volumes returned to normal with 6.2 million shares changing hands as the counter closed at \$3.28, down 0.61 per cent. It had gained 0.92 per cent over the previous two days, on volumes of 20.4 million shares traded the day after the announcement and 9.7 million on Wednesday.

Corporate Singapore is heading into the earnings season with about a third of the STI constituents reporting results over the next four weeks. Singapore Press Holdings kicked things off last week and will be followed by CapitaLand and CapitaLand Mall Trust next week.

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Straits Times Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	CURRENCY LAST TRADED SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
286	245	Ascendas Reit	273	-1	21309	5.9	1.3
196	161	CapitaCom Trust	183	unch	11435	4.7	1
388	298	Capitaland	328	-5	6235	3.7	0.7
238	195	CapitaMall Trust	228	-5	16054	4.9	1.1
1360	780	CityDev	874	-11	1789	2.1	0.8
251	196	ComfortDelGro	213	unch	7559	4.9	1.8
3128	2265	DBS Grp	2508	-9	2666	5.7	1.4
994	767	DairyFarm USD	US944	-31	733	2.2	-
141	85.5	Genting Sing	108	unch	21589	3.2	1.7
39	22.5	Golden Agri-Res	25.5	-15	11359	3.2	0.6
42	23	HPH Trust USD	US25.5	unch	5652	10.3	0.4
744	588	HongkongLand USD	US696	-1	1612	2.9	0.3
6974	5580	JMH USD	US6647	-38	254	2.4	0.7
4149	3155	JSH USD	US3659	-18	246	0.9	0.4
4105	2766	Jardine C&C	3712	+3	374	3.1	1.8
892	567	Keppel Corp	627	+3	2274	3.5	1
1404	1036	OCBC Bank	1173	-4	3378	3.2	1.3
585	455	SATS	489	-1	919	3.7	3.4
850	672	SGX	745	+3	4418	4	8.5
1184	914	SIA	967	-9	1075	4.1	0.8
292	231	SPH	251	-3	2213	5.2	1.1
370	319	ST Engineering	363	-1	2304	4.1	5.3
360	243	Sembcorp Ind	162	unch	11679	1.2	1.4
365	283	Singtel	305	-1	13754	6.7	1.7
94	57.5	ThaiBev	71.5 cd	-1	13985	0.9	3.5
3037	2380	UOB	2644	-14	2184	3.8	13
935	591	UOL	658	-7	1997	2.7	0.6
2965	1320	Venture Corp	1488	-42	1295	4	1.9
331	297	Wilmar Intl	325	unch	2440	3.1	0.9
166	84	YZJ Shipbldg SGD	132	+3	17007	3.4	1

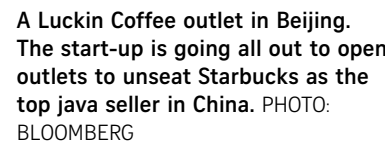
FTSE ST Large & Mid-Cap Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	CURRENCY LAST TRADED SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
286	245	Ascendas Reit	273	-1	21309	5.9	1.3
127	105	Ascott Reit	115	+2	2704	6.2	0.9
77	59	Bumitama Agri	69	+0.5	87	11	1.6
185	143	CDL HTrust	157	+1	1387	-	1.1
196	161	CapitaCom Trust	183	unch	11435	4.7	1
388	298	Capitaland	328	-5	6235	3.7	0.7
238	195	CapitaMall Trust	228	-5	16054	4.9	1.1
1360	780	CityDev	874	-11	1789	2.1	0.8
251	196	ComfortDelGro	213	unch	7559	4.9	1.8
3128	2265	DBS Grp	2508	-9	2666	5.7	1.4
994	767	DairyFarm USD	US944	-31	733	2.2	-
78	59	Far East HTrust	63	+0.5	881	-	0.7
197	150	First Resources	168	+2	1612	4	2.2
236	211	Fraser's Cpt Tr	226	-1	490	5.3	1.1
117	101	Fraser's L&I Tr	107	+1	3734	6.4	1.1
141	85.5	Genting Sing	108	unch	21589	3.2	1.7
39	22.5	Golden Agri-Res	25.5	-15	11359	3.2	0.6
234	167	GuocoLand Ltd	184	+3	628	3.8	0.5
42	23	HPH Trust USD	US25.5	unch	5652	10.3	0.4
744	588	HongkongLand USD	US696	+1	1612	2.9	0.3
6974	5580	JMH USD	US6647	-38	254	2.4	0.7
4149	3155	JSH USD	US3659	-18	246	0.9	0.4
4105	2766	Jardine C&C	3712	+3	374	3.1	1.8
892	567	Keppel Corp	627	+3	2274	3.5	1
133	108	Keppel Reit	118	unch	2382	4.8	0.8
215	151	Keppel T&T	208	unch	1280	5.5	3.9
273	170	JMH USD	US189	unch	479	1.6	1.4
174	152	Mapletree Com Tr	174	+3	8624	5.2	1.2
213	184	Mapletree Ind Tr	199	+2	4200	5.9	1.3
138	118	Mapletree Log Tr	134	unch	6153	5.7	1.2
128	107	Mapletree NAC Tr	119	+1	5538	6.3	0.9
73	73	NetLink NBN Tr	77.5	unch	6128	-	1
1404	1036	OCBC Bank	1173	-4	3378	3.2	1.3
215	136	OUÉ	147	-2	195	2	0.3
92.5	64.5	OUÉ HTrust	68.5	-0.5	987	-	0.9
250	157	Olam Intl	172	-1	232	4.4	0.9
60.8	28	Oxley	29.5	-0.5	2488	5.1	0.8
306	256	ParkwayLife Reit	269	-1	648	5	1.5
121	98	Raffles Medical	115	unch	531	2	2.7
585	455	SATS	489	-1	919	3.7	3.4
850	672	SGX	745	+3	4418	4	8.5
1184	914	SIA	967	-9	1075	4.1	0.8
337	220	SIA Engineering	255	-1	341	5.1	1.9
292	231	SPH	251	-3	2213	5.2	1.1
107	98	SPHREIT	101	unch	1887	5.5	1.1
370	319	ST Engineering	363	-1	2304	4.1	5.3
360	243	Sembcorp Ind	162	unch	11679	1.2	1.4
281	149	Sembcorp Marine	162	+2	11679	1.2	1.4
58	39	Silverlake Axis	40.5	-0.5	1974	7.4	5.9
147	88.5	SingPost	98	+0.5	2128	3.6	1.3
365	283	Singtel	305	-1	13754	6.7	1.7
299	158	StarHub	177	+1	1044	9	5.4
78	63.5	StarhillGbl Reit	70.5	+0.5	3016	6.5	0.8
360	243	Suntree Reit	188	-1	4059	5.3	0.9
94	57.5	ThaiBev	71.5 cd	-1	13985	0.9	3.5
10.2	3.7	Thomson Medical	7.5 ce	-0.1	9590	-	2.7
3037	2380	UOB	2644	-14	2184	3.8	13
935	591	UOL	658	-7	1997	2.7	0.6
2965	1320	Venture Corp	1488	-42	1295	4	1.9
331	297	Wilmar Intl	325	unch	2440	3.1	0.9
244	183	Wing Tai	198	+1	330	4	0.5
166	84	YZJ Shipbldg SGD	132	+3	17007	3.4	1
191	116	Yanlord Land	127	-2	1715	5.4	0.5

FTSE ST Small-Cap Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	LAST SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
145	129	AIMSAMP Cap Reit	134	-3	996	7.7	1
71	48	Accordia Golf Tr	55	unch	2355	7	0.6
90.5	74	Ascendas-hTrust	81	unch	507	-	0.8
119	99	Ascendas-iTrust	108	+1	1068	5.6	1.3
58.5	12.2	Asian Pay TV Tr	12.7	-0.1	2051	5.12	0.2
65.5	48	Banyan Tree	58	-0.5	95	1.7	0.8
281	115	Best World	273	+3	2464	1.5	9.8
85.5	76	Boustead	79.5	-1	42	3.8	1.2
126	79.5	BreadTalk	88	-0.5	81	8	2.3
658	521	Bukit Sembawang	555	-12	34	3.2	1.1
88.5	65.5	Cache Log Trust	73.5	unch	2205	9.9	1.1
55.5	39.5	Centurion	40.5	-0.5	255	6.2	0.7
169	104	China Aviation	118	+1	1219	3.8	1
47.5	29.5	China Everbright	33.5	+1.5	306	1.5	0.6
165	90.5	China Sunshine	130	+1	1131	2.3	1.5
107	64	Chip Eng Seng	69.5	-1	1478	5.8	0.6
53.5	31.5	Cosco	35	-0.5	3590	-	1.5
700	302	Delong	601	+2	6	-	0.6
28	17.5	Duty Free Intl	21.5cd	+0.5	785	8.6	1.4
79	67.5	EC World Reit	72	+0.5	99	8.4	0.8
59.5	47	ESR-REIT	53	-0.5	7487	7.3	0.9
142	92	First Reit	101cd	-2	2988	8.5	1
155	134	Fraser's Com Tr	147	+4	3162	6.5	0.9
82.5	66.5	Fraser's HTrust	70.5	unch	550	-	0.9
27.5	16.4	Geo Energy Res	18.9	-0.2	815	5.3	1.1
91	70.5	HRnetGroup	79	-0.5	70	2.9	2.4
69	52	Health Mgt Intl	54	-	-	0.6	5.2
279	73	Hi-P Intl	93	-0.5	7782	26.9	1.4
283	252	Hong Leong Fin	263	+3	42	4.9	0.6
82.5	71	IREIT Global	74.5	unch	254	8	1
41.5	18.3	Indofood Agri	19.9	-0.6	722	-	0.2
79.5	43	Japfa	77	+1	2583	0.6	1.4
84.5	49	KSH	52	-1	64	4.2	0.9
86.9	53	Kep-KBS Reit USD	65	-0.5	101	-	0.5
148	128	Keppel DC Reit	142	unch	3943	5	1.4
188	132	Keppel T&T	187	+1	578	1.9	1.2
119	7	KrisEnergy	8.4	unch	19215	-	1
79.5	44.5	Lian Beng	51cd	-1	306	4.4	0.4
42.5	18	Lippo Malls Tr	21	-0.5	1414	16.4	0.8
54	30	MM2 Asia	34.5	+1	993	-	1.9
98.5	69.5	ManulifeReit USD	81	unch	1511	6.8	0.7
120	95	Metro	99.5	-1.5	99	5	0.6
32	5	Noble	8.1	susp	-	-	-
66.9	45	OUE Com Reit	48	unch	876	9.7	0.5
68	54	PEC	58	+0.5	50	3.4	0.6
46	17	POSH	19.2	+0.7	56	-	0.6
64.5	44.5	Q&M Dental	49.5	unch	61	3.3	3.5
117	55.5	QAF Ltd	66	-0.5	98	7.6	0.7
83.5	70	RHT HealthTrust	75.5	-0.5	1776	6	1
124	96	Riverstone	110	unch	88	2.1	3.6
55	22	SIIC Environment	29	-0.5	439	-	0.8
45	38	Sabana Reit	41.5	+1	443	8	0.5
119	90	Sheng Siong	111	-1	1738	3	6.1
25.5	11.5	Sino Grandness	11.7	halt	-	-	0.2
71	56	SoilbuildBizReit	60	unch	473	9.5	1
129	80.5	TianjinZX USD	87.5	+1	307	-	0.7
50	32.5	Tuan Sing	39	+0.5	1189	1.5	0.5
136	54	UMS	60	-0.5	2635	8.3	1.4
112	58.5	Valuetronics	69	-1	1591	6.6	1.58
17.8	8.3	Ying Li Intl	12.5	-0.2	4305	-	0.3
54	24	Yoma Strategic	37	-0.5	2460	0.7	1
37.5	16.1	Yongnam	18.1	-0.2	685	-	0.4





## China start-up pouring in \$176m a year counts GLC among investors

Launched about a year ago, the local challenger is confident it has a winning model: Small coffee outlets that will outnumber Starbucks cafes by year's end, an app that rushes out deliveries in about 18 minutes and lots of steep discounts.

Luckin's success so far is putting pressure on Starbucks, which until now had no meaningful challenger and dominated the market with more than 50 per cent share. The companies are employing vastly different approaches in their claims to the US\$3.2 billion retail coffee market that is Starbucks' fastest-grow-

Currently valued at US\$2.2 billion and backed by investors including Singapore's GIC and China Interna-

BLOOMBERG

**Keppel Capital**

AAMTF III targets to invest in multi-asset classes across key gateway cities in the region, including Singapore, Shanghai, Beijing, Tokyo, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Seoul. The target asset classes comprise retail and accommodation assets as well as offices, business parks and logistic facilities. To date, the fund has made investments in Shanghai, Tokyo and Brisbane.

When fully leveraged and invested, AAMTF III will have assets under management (AUM) of about US\$2.4 billion. Including AAMTF III, Alpha currently manages six real estate and data centre funds with total AUM of US\$9.5 billion as at Dec 31 last year on a fully leveraged and invested basis.

Sunrise Shares, formerly ITE Electric, was one of those caught up in 2013's penny stock saga. After being called up for investigations, ITE's then chief executive Ho Cheng Leong sold his stake to the firm's former non-executive chairman, who later also divested his entire stake for \$6 million to Mr Wong in 2016.

"With the pricing lowered to between \$46 million and \$49 million, we expect strong interest from both investors and owner occupiers who are looking to acquire a centrally located freehold commercial building in a bustling area undergoing rejuvenation and gentrification," he added.

Currencies	Against $\text{US\$}$		Against $\text{US\$}$	
	Bid	Offer	Bid	Offer
<b>SS/US\\$ to one unit of foreign currency:</b>				
Australian dollar	0.9708	0.9718	0.7157	0.7162
Canadian dollar	1.0207	1.0214	0.7527	0.7525
Euro	1.5445	1.5454	1.1387	1.1389
NZ dollar	0.9139	0.9150	0.6738	0.6743
Sterling pound	1.7442	1.7454	1.2859	1.2863
US dollar	1.3564	1.3569	-	-
<b>SS/US\\$ to 100 units of foreign currency:</b>				
Chinese renminbi	20.0440	20.0559	14.7774	14.7807
Danish kroner	20.6942	20.7050	15.2567	15.2590
Hong Kong dollar	17.29	17.30	12.7473	12.7484
Indian Rupee	190	190	14.018	14.019
Indonesia rupiah	0.0096	0.0096	0.0070	0.0071
Japanese yen	1.2465	1.2473	0.9189	0.9192
Korean won	0.1038	0.1029	0.0891	0.0891
Malaysian ringgit	32.94	32.99	24.2836	24.3132
New Taiwan dollar	4.3942	4.3972	3.2396	3.2407
Norwegian krone	15.8334	15.8448	11.6731	11.6772
Philippine peso	2.5874	2.5890	1.9076	1.9080
Saudi riyal	36.1591	36.1763	26.6581	26.6610
Swedish krona	15.0204	15.0309	11.0737	11.0774
Swiss franc	136.8028	136.9085	100.8573	100.8980
Thai Baht	42.762	42.8034	31.576	31.584

GOVERNMENT BONDS							Jan 17
Period	Issue code	Coupon rate (%)	Maturity	Close Bid	High	Day's Low	
2-Year	<b>NY05100N</b> .....	3.250%	01-Sep-20	102.07	102.11	102.07	
5-Year	<b>NX13100H</b> .....	2.750%	01-Jul-23	103.21	103.23	103.20	
10-Year	<b>NX18100A</b> .....	2.625%	01-May-28	103.87	103.95	103.60	
15-Year	<b>NZ13100H</b> .....	3.375%	01-Sep-33	111.79	111.79	111.61	
20-Year	<b>NZ16100H</b> .....	2.250%	01-Aug-36	97.14	0.00	0.00	
30-Year	<b>NX16100H</b> .....	2.750%	01-Mar-46	103.84	104.00	103.40	

Note: Based on latest issue

Source: Monetary Authority of Singapore

Jan16	Index	Change	In local curr %dy	curr %yr	Change
World Preliminary	1503.0	0.3	4.3		
EAFE Preliminary	1042.0	0.1	3.4		
Europe Preliminary	1451.3	0.3	3.3		
Australia	1175.3	0.3	3.0		
Austria Preliminary	532.7	1.6	7.0		
Belgium Preliminary	968.4	-0.5	5.9		
Canada Preliminary	1932.3	0.4	5.5		
Denmark Preliminary	7670.8	0.4	3.6		
Finland Preliminary	693.3	0.9	6.2		
France Preliminary	1745.5	0.5	1.9		
Germany Preliminary	877.1	0.4	4.0		
Greece Preliminary	45.5	-0.5	4.8		
India	1267.5	0.1	0.4		
Indonesia	7389.4	0.2	4.4		
Ireland Preliminary	186.1	0.5	3.8		
Israel Preliminary	244.2	0.0	5.9		
Italy Preliminary	6618.1	1.5	6.4		
Japan	922.3	-0.3	3.3		
Korea	626.8	0.6	3.8		
Malaysia	580.0	-0.3	-0.3		
Netherlands Preliminary	1490.4	0.4	2.2		
New Zealand	137.7	1.0	3.7		
Norway Preliminary	2910.6	0.1	4.5		
Pakistan	388.1	-0.5	8.8		
Philippines	1332.3	-2.3	5.6		
Portugal Preliminary	83.5	-1.1	3.4		
Singapore	1686.6	0.6	5.8		
Singapore Free	362.6	0.6	5.8		



9TH EDITION

# Singapore

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# OBITUARIES

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"He has freely scattered his gifts to the poor,  
his righteousness endures forever;  
his horn will be lifted high in honor"  
*Psalms 112:9*

NINETEENTH ANNIVERSARY



**JACOB BALLAS**  
18.1.2000

Precious Memories  
Come from Love

Rosslyn



**LIM SOO HWANG**  
Age: 77

passed away peacefully on 16 January 2019.

Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

**Husband:** Sim Khoo Boon @ Sim Ah Pee (Deceased)

**Son:**  
Sim Lee Khoo Andy

**Daughter:**  
Sim Sok Har

**Grandchildren:**  
Ethan Sim Gin Hian  
Ellie Sim Gin Ying  
Ewan Sim Gin Yi

**Daughter-in-law:**  
Elena Lim Pei Ling

**Son-in-law:**  
Teo Poh Chuan Anthony

**Godson:**  
Lim Ken Joo

Brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends.

Wake at Blk 76 Redhill Road S(150076).

Cortege will leave on 20 January 2019 (Sunday) at 9.45am  
for Mandai Crematorium for cremation at 10.45am.

"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside quiet waters". *Psalms 23:1-2*



**MARY GASPER PEREIRA**  
Age: 95

was called home to be with the Lord on Tuesday,  
15th January 2019.

Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

**Husband:** Mark S. Pereira (deceased)

**Daughter:**  
Dorothy Magdalene Pereira

**Sons:**  
Anthony Mark Pereira  
(deceased)  
Raymond Mark Pereira  
Cyril Mark Pereira  
Donald Sylvester Pereira  
Mervyn Mark Pereira  
Dennis Mark Pereira

**Grandchildren:**  
Kevin Aloysius Pereira  
Audrey Cherissa Pereira  
Elaine Irene Pereira  
Joanne Sharmini Gale  
Natasha Ann Pereira  
Marianne Sharmala Gale  
Kenneth Mervyn Pereira  
Lorraine Krystal Pereira  
Mark Raymond Pereira  
Clinton Mark Pereira  
Bianca Marie Pereira  
Darren Ignatius Pereira

**Son-in-Law:**  
Geoffrey Gale (deceased)

**Daughters-in-Law:**  
Irene Yeow Cheng Lian

Jenny Ann Spain  
Kathleen Marsh  
Mary Lilian Constantine  
Jennifer Phyllis Gomez  
Mary Meena Pereira

**Spouse:**  
S D Nixon Das

Ross Fox  
Leonard Pereira  
Manuel Morantes  
Bernice Lim  
Charles Raj

**Great-Grandchildren:**  
Merissa Arianna Pereira, Marcus Russell Pereira,  
Joshua Leonard Pereira, Gracie Anna Harmony Das,  
Claire Elizabeth Pereira, Evan Jude Wisdom Das,  
Dylan Mark Pereira, Jedidiah Geoffrey Fox

**All Relatives and Friends.**

Wake at the Sacred Heart Cathedral,  
1729 Jalan Keris, Taman Sri Tebrau 80500  
Johor Bahru, Johor.

Funeral service on Saturday, 19th January  
2019 @ 1 PM at the Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Thereafter, cortege leaves for Kebun Teh Crematorium  
(Lot 1140 Jalan Kebun Teh) for cremation.

"I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel"  
*Psalms 16:7*



**Andrew Goh Khuan Joo**  
Age: 87

Was called home to be with the Lord on 17 January 2019.  
Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

**Wife:** Agnes Lim

**Children:**  
Kevin Goh  
Sharen Goh  
Eugene Goh  
Edwin Goh

**Spouses:**  
Angeline Cheah  
Russell Sim  
Karenne Tun  
Ivie Ng

And all relatives and friends.

Wake is held at The Oratory Nativity Parish,  
98 Hougang Avenue 8, Singapore 538791.

Nightly prayers will be held at 8.00pm.

Cortege leaves on Monday 21 January 2019 at 11.00am for  
Funeral Mass at Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary,  
24 Highland Road, Singapore 549115 at 11.30am, thereafter  
to Mandai Crematorium Hall 2 for cremation at 1.00pm.

"Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my  
life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."  
*Psalms 23:6*



**Ainsley Constant Oliveiro**  
Age: 63

Was called home to be with the Lord on 17 January 2019.  
Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

**Wife:** Felicie Oliveiro née Di-Dier

**Daughters:**  
Valerie Oliveiro-Miles  
Constance Oliveiro

**Sons-in-law:**  
Jordan N Miles  
Aung Ko Ko Tin

**Grandson:**  
Caden A Miles

And all relatives and friends.

Wake is held at Block 212, Bishan Street 23,  
#08-265, Singapore 570212.

Wake visiting hours: 12.00pm to 10.00pm

Nightly prayers will be held at 8.00pm.

Cortege leaves the home on  
Monday 21 January 2019 at 12.15pm.

Funeral Mass at Church of Our Lady of Perpetual  
Succour, 31 Siglap Hill at 1.00pm.

Cremation: Mandai Crematorium Hall 4 at 2.45pm

Om Namah Shivaya



**Rajamani d/o Govindarajoo**  
Age: 72

Passed away peacefully on 17 January 2019.  
Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

**Husband:** Late Solayya Konar Ramaiah

**Sons:**  
R. Pandu (SPF / Seccom)  
R. Thangaveelu (SIA)

**Daughters:**  
R. Elisver  
R. Nalini (UCO Bank)  
R. Ambal

**Grandson:**  
M. Veeresh

**Brothers:**  
P. G. Balu  
A. Ganapathy  
A. Krishna

**Sisters:**  
G. Thanalatchmi  
G. Jagathambal  
Caregiver: Lina

**Son-in-law:**  
M. Krishnan

**Sisters-in-law:**  
Rajakumari  
Daisy Michael  
Neelamalar

**Brothers-in-law:**  
Late V. Rajakumaran  
Late RN Krishna Murti

And all relatives and friends.

Ammu is resting at Block 497F Tampines Street 45 #06-132,  
Singapore 524497. Tel: 9021 1870 / 9389 0976

Cortege leaves on Friday 18 January 2019 at 3.00pm  
for Mandai Crematorium Hall 1 for cremation at 4.15pm.

"Let no man in the world live in delusion.  
Without a Guru none can cross over to the other shore."  
~ Guru Nanak



**Sardar Ram Jagat Singh**  
s/o Late W.S Ram Singh Kairon  
Age: 90

Passed away peacefully on 6 January 2019.  
Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

**Wives:** Late Isar Kaur  
Lan Lock Mooi

**Sons:**  
Harcharan Singh  
Amar Singh  
Karam Singh  
Sukhbir Singh  
Darshan Singh  
Balbir Singh  
Karpal Singh

**Daughters:**  
Late Harpajan Kaur

**Daughters-in-law:**  
Sunita S.K.  
Jasvir Kaur

Rajinder Kaur  
Shama Bai  
Salwinder Kaur

**Son-in-law:**  
Vijayan Pillai

**Grandchildren, great-grandchildren,  
sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends.**  
Antim Ardas will be held on Saturday 19 January 2019  
at Silat Road Sikh Temple from 12.00pm to 1.30pm.

The family of the late



**MR SEE KAR SENG**  
Departed on 11 Jan 2019

wish to express their heartfelt thanks and appreciation  
to relatives, friends, colleagues and business associates  
for their kind assistance, attendance, condolences,  
donations and wreaths during their recent bereavement.

**Special thanks to Clan Associations,  
Doctors, Nurses, Social Workers  
from Assissi Hospice.**

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ones whom you  
remember...

"In memoriam"  
is for the loved  
ones whom you  
remember...

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*2 Timothy 4:7*



**Innasmuthu Arulmanee**  
Age: 74

Was called home to be with the Lord on 18th January 2019.

Dearly missed and will always be treasured by Brothers, Sisters-in-law, Nephews, Nieces, Grand Nephews & Nieces, Caregivers, Relatives and Friends.

Wake at Block 456A Choa Chu Kang Avenue 4, Singapore 681456.

Night service on Friday 18th January 2019 at 8.00pm.

Cortege leaves on Saturday 19th January 2019 at 11.15am for Funeral Service at Symma Assembly at 12.00pm, thereafter to Mandai Crematorium Hall 3 for cremation at 1.40pm.

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SPORT

60

POOL OF FOOTBALLERS NEW S'PORE U-15  
COACH PHILIPPE AW RECKONS HE HAS C9



LEADERBOARD

1ST RD (selected, 78 players yet to finish weather-disrupted round)

66 Hung Chien-yao (Tpe)

67 Miguel Tabuena (Phi), Yoshinori Fujimoto (Jpn), Yuta Ikeda (Jpn)

68 Travis Smyth (Aus), Matthew Fitzpatrick (Eng), Jazz Janewattananond (Tha)

69 Sergio Garcia (Esp), Koh Dengshan (Sgp), Choi Ho-sung (Kor), Ryo Ishikawa (Jpn)

70 Prayad Marksang (Tha)

2ND RD (selected tee times)

10am Paul Casey (Eng), Poom Saksansin (Tha)

10.10am Davis Love III (USA), Shugo Imahira (Jpn)

2.50pm Fitzpatrick, Ikeda, Choi

3pm Ishikawa, Janewattananond, Garcia

4pm Hung

Hung Chien-yao of Chinese Taipei on the ninth hole during the first round of the SMBC Singapore Open. He signed for a five-under 66 after recording an eagle and four birdies to go with a bogey.

ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM

SMBC Singapore Open 2019

DAD'S THE WAY

Marriage and baby give Hung new perspective, help him to first-round lead

Lester Wong

Hung Chien-yao missed the cut in 2016 and 2017 before he secured his best SMBC Singapore Open result when he tied for 60th last year.

So a five-under 66 that gave him

the clubhouse lead in a weather-disrupted opening round at Sentosa Golf Club yesterday caught the Taiwanese by surprise.

"Honestly, I'm not quite sure what to say. My luck today was extremely good," said the 28-year-old, who had an eagle and four

birdies to go with a bogey at the 7,398-yard Serapong course.

"The bad shots I hit, I managed to recover from and even create birdie chances."

The world No. 591 finished a humble 53rd on the Asian Tour's Order of Merit last year with winnings of US\$80,406 (S\$109,000), missing his last three cuts of 2018.

But getting married and becoming a father last year have given him a new perspective.

"I wasn't in a good state mentally to finish 2018. But I just told myself I had nothing to lose and that the worst that can happen is I go home early to see my baby. That helped me to be very relaxed," he said.

A group of six players are one stroke behind him at the US\$1 million (S\$1.35 million) tournament, although three of them – Richard Jung, Taihei Sato and Chan Shih-chang – have yet to complete their first rounds.

An afternoon weather delay of around two hours prevented half the 156-man field from finishing, with play suspended at 7.10pm.

Among the players affected are world No. 24 Paul Casey and 21-time winner on the PGA Tour Davis Love III. They will resume play at 7.30am today, before the second round at 9.40am.

Filipino Miguel Tabuena was one of three on four-under 67 who finished their rounds, alongside the Japanese duo of Yoshinori Fujimoto and Yuta Ikeda.

"I took a longer layoff than usual at the end of last year and didn't touch a club for almost a month, so I'm quite happy with my performance today," said the 24-year-old, who is looking to improve on his eighth-place finish last year.

Defending champion Sergio Garcia shot a two-under 69, declaring himself satisfied after beginning the day feeling slightly unwell.

"I've had a little bit of a sinus infection for a few days and an upset

stomach this morning but I think I played quite nicely today," said the Spaniard. "Obviously missed a couple of shots here and there being a bit rusty but I gave myself chances today and made some good putts."

"The greens here are very fast and tricky and you have to be very aware of your speed."

Koh Dengshan led the way on the local front, matching Garcia with a 69.

"I hit the ball good today and you need to do that on this course. I putted well too. It's obviously nice to be in this position. It always feels good whenever you get to play in your National Open," said the 30-year-old, who is one of 12 locals in the field. "It's good to have people cheering you on out there. It keeps you positive and definitely motivates you to play better."

lesterw@sph.com.sg

SMBC SINGAPORE OPEN

Day 2: StarHub Ch201, 11am & 3pm

Family Love is in the air

Few famous sporting parent-child duos can say they have competed against each other at the highest level.

This week, Davis Love III and his son Davis Love IV, who is better known as Dru, are doing so for the 14th time at the SMBC Singapore Open at the Sentosa Golf Club, and likely not for the last time.

The elder Love, 54, admitted to being occasionally torn between being a parent and a competitor.

"It's more stress for me, really, because I'm trying to play my ball and

then his as well. I always want (Dru) to play well and I prefer him to beat me," said the World Golf Hall of Famer, who also has a daughter, Alexia.

The younger Love, for his part, says that it is business as usual now, whether or not his father is in the same field.

"We've done it a few times now. At first, it was comforting to have him there and then there was more pressure because I wanted to beat him," said the 25-year-old, who turned pro in 2017 at the US Open

and shot two-over 73 yesterday.

"And then I did (beat him). So now it's just playing golf."

The pair revealed that the decision to make their first trip to Singapore was a family one, even though both men are chasing qualifying spots for July's The Open Championship. The top-four finishers here not already exempt will earn berths for Royal Portrush.

"The main thing was his mum (Robin) said we were going," said Love III, who was three under through 11 holes due to a rain delay.

"I could be playing in the PGA Tour Champions in Hawaii this week and Dru would be in the Bahamas if he made it through Q-school. But she said, 'We're going to Singapore because we've never been' and that made it very easy."

Golf has been in the family for three generations.

The late Davis Love Jr was also a professional golfer who later became a respected instructor.

Love III's track record speaks for itself: 21 PGA Tour wins, the 1997 PGA Championship and a two-time Ryder Cup captain. Last week, he was seventh at the Sony Open in Hawaii in his 762nd PGA start.



Dru Love approaches his putt on the eighth hole during the first round of the SMBC Singapore Open yesterday. He shot a two-over 73.



Davis Love III shielding himself from the rain on the seventh hole yesterday. He was three under through 11 holes for the rain-delayed round. ST PHOTOS: KEVIN LIM

Dru has yet to approach those peaks, but his father believes there is no hurry, saying: "The one thing I've learnt over 30 years playing is just to be patient with yourself."

"When you're young, you want things to happen fast but just being methodical goes a long way."

Lester Wong

BUSINESS AS USUAL NOW

At first, it was comforting to have him there and then there was more pressure because I wanted to beat him. And then I did (beat him). So now it's just playing golf.



DRU LOVE, on the different stages he experienced playing his dad.

DON'T MIND LOSING TO HIM

It's more stress for me, really, because I'm trying to play my ball and then his as well. I always want (Dru) to play well and I prefer him to beat me.



DAVIS LOVE III, on having his son in the same field.

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<http://str.sg/ousA>



# AW TO KEEP DOOR OPEN FOR YOUTH

**New U-15 head coach to rely on cooperation with stakeholders to give every player a shot at shining**

**Shamir Osman**

He spent eight years as a youth coach in the Home United set-up and continued to give young players opportunities in his two years as head coach of the club's senior side.

Many would expect Philippe Aw to slide seamlessly into his new role as head coach of the Singapore Under-15 football team, but he knows everything will be different.

The Football Association of Singapore (FAS) has closed down its in-house FAS Football Academy (FFA) and Aw, 41, will not have a set squad to work with.

He will have to leverage his con-

tacts in schools, Singapore Premier League (SPL) clubs and youth academies, but he vowed to give every aspiring footballer a chance to shine for the Republic.

"There may be talents in schools that don't do well in tournaments, perhaps even in schools that don't have football teams. I will not close the door on anyone who wants to represent Singapore," said Aw, whose appointment was announced yesterday, along with that of former Singapore international Fadzhasny Juraimi as the national Under-18 head coach.

"I'll go and watch games, but can't be everywhere, so contacts in these partner organisations are very important. I will go and look at every player I hear has potential."

And new processes around national youth teams will provide Aw with the platform to do that.

Most schools and clubs train three times a week, so he will call up

potential players on two of their free days, and these players will come to him in smaller groups, allowing him to have a big squad while affording him the opportunity to work on individual improvement.

"On paper, I have about 60 players now, but calling them for training in batches means that I can help them get better on certain aspects of their game, and not just work on team training. For example, I can get a group of defenders together and work on specifics of defending," he explained.

"It's important to not overload players, but this means I can bring in more players."

Aw will lead his team at July's Asean Football Federation (AFF) U-15 Championship in Thailand, then turn his attention to qualifiers for the 2020 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) U-16 Championship later this year.

But he asserts that results at these tournaments should not be the only matrix for assessment of progress.

"There are two things that need to go hand in hand – results for the country, and individual development of these players so that at 19, they are ready to play in the SPL," he said.

The SPL does not have a reserve or an Under-21 league, which means that players who do not get promoted from a club's Under-18 team to their senior side fall out of the system.

"If I can teach them well, and in a few years we have a big pool of high-level players and it benefits the SPL and our senior national team – then I'll say this is successful," he said.

"But we must be patient. I can't work miracles. No one can."

shamiro@sph.com.sg



EXCITING TIMES

**What really excites me is that I can provide an opportunity for an unknown 15-year-old to perform and go on to represent the country.**



**PHILIPPE AW**, new national Under-15 coach, on his task ahead.

## Japan fight back to beat Uzbekistan



Japan celebrating Tsukasa Shiotani's strike from outside the box that gave the Samurai Blue a 2-1 comeback victory over Uzbekistan in their Asian Cup Group F match in Al Ain yesterday. Eldor Shomurodov's solo effort on 40 minutes, his fourth goal of the Cup, had given the Uzbeks a lead that lasted just three minutes, when Yoshinori Muto headed in the equaliser. Japan finished with a perfect three wins and nine points to top the group ahead of the Uzbeks, who have six points and will face champions Australia in the last 16. Oman are third on three points after beating Turkmenistan 3-1 to also secure a place in the knockout stages. On Wednesday, Iran, joint favourites with South Korea, drew 0-0 with Iraq to top Group D on goal difference. They have seven points each, while Vietnam beat Yemen 2-0 to finish third. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Higuain set to reunite with Sarri

**LONDON** • Chelsea have agreed a deal to sign striker Gonzalo Higuain on loan from Juventus until the end of the season, according to reports in the British media.

The Argentina international joined the Italian champions in 2016 but was loaned to AC Milan at the start of the current season in which he has scored eight goals in 22 appearances so far.

The Guardian reported yesterday that the Blues will sign the 31-year-old on loan until the end of

the campaign, with an option to make that move permanent on a further 12-month deal.

Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri is keen to strengthen his options in attack with Spain forward Alvaro Morata misfiring and having been forced to deploy playmaker Eden Hazard as a "false nine" in recent games.

Sarri worked with Higuain when he was manager at Napoli and it was under the Italian that the striker scored 36 goals to equal the

Serie A record for most goals in a season in 2015-16.

He was then sold to Juve for £79.8 million (\$\$139.5 million), only to be squeezed out by Cristiano Ronaldo's arrival this season.

Sky Sports also reported that the loan deal could be extended for another year subject to "certain conditions".

Higuain's arrival could see Chelsea sanction a loan move for Morata, who is in talks with Atletico Madrid about a return to

Spain's LaLiga.

The Spanish striker, who moved to Stamford Bridge in July 2017 for an initial £58 million, is expected to re-join the club where he began his career as a youth player.

Chelsea are also in talks with Monaco over the sale of Michy Batshuayi, for whom they are attempting to recoup as much as £40 million. The Belgium striker is keen on a return to the south of France, where he played previously with Marseille. THE GUARDIAN, REUTERS

## Crooked Kane won't change Pochettino's plans

**LONDON** • Harry Kane's ankle injury that will sideline him until March was tough to take but has not affected the club's January transfer window plans, Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino told Sky Sports on Wednesday.

The striker damaged left ankle ligaments during the 1-0 Premier League loss to Manchester United at Wembley last Sunday and will be out for at least six weeks.

Spurs are already without forward Son Heung-min, who left after the United game to play for South Korea at the Asian Cup

which runs until the Feb 1 final.

But France midfielder Moussa Sissoko, who injured his groin before half-time in the United defeat, should be fit for the League Cup semi-final second leg at Chelsea next Thursday. Spurs lead 1-0 from the first game at Wembley.

Pochettino said it was "tough" to be without "one of the best strikers in the world" but added that it could be an opportunity for the academy players.

He said: "We were always open to improve with Harry in (good) condition or not, but we know it is go-

ing to be difficult to add the player we want. It didn't change our mind, it's a very good opportunity for players to play more, to step up. I'm sure it's going to be a good opportunity for young players from the academy to show their quality."

He has brought several youngsters into the first team squad, with midfielder Oliver Skipp and Argentinian defender Juan Foyth already featuring this season. But he is likely to rely on the experienced Fernando Llorente as a replacement for Kane, while speedy Brazilian forward Lucas Moura should be

back from injury soon.

"We know what it means to have Harry Kane fit, but we have a squad and (his absence) can't be an excuse," Pochettino said, ahead of the Premier League match at Fulham on Sunday. "We need to play with the same mentality – thinking we can beat any team."

Meanwhile, midfielder Mousa Dembele joined Guangzhou R&F yesterday on a three-year deal. The Belgian international, 31, will cost the Chinese Super League club about €12 million (\$\$18.55 million). REUTERS, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LOTTERY

TOTO

Thu, 17 Jan 2019

Draw No. 3441/2019

Group 1 Prize \$1,172,595

Winning Numbers

05 10 22 30 42 48

13

Prize Group

Share Amount

No. of Winning Shares

Group 1	No Winner	0
Group 2	\$246,863	1
Group 3	\$1,907	89
Group 4	\$490	189
Group 5	\$50	4,732
Group 6	\$25	6,444
Group 7	\$10	91,721

Next Draw Mon, 21 Jan 2019, 6.30pm

Draw No. 3442/2019

Group 1 Prize \$2,400,000 est.

Draw Venue: Singapore Pools (Private) Limited, 210 Middle Road, #01-01, Singapore 188994

SPORTS FIXTURES HIGHLIGHTS

Event	Home	Away	Timing	Venue
Fri, 18 Jan 2019				
A League	Western Sydney	Adelaide	4.50pm	LW
Sat, 19 Jan 2019				
German League	Hoffenheim	Bayern Munich	3.30am	LW*
English League Champ	Norwich	Birmingham	3.45am	LW*
Spanish League	Getafe	Alaves	4.00am	LW*

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Australian Open 2019

# BALLS BEAR BRUNT OF PLAYERS' CRITICISM

## Federer, Tomic not greatest fans of new Japanese-made Dunlops introduced this year

MELBOURNE • The Australian Open's new balls this year are dividing opinion at Melbourne Park, with even the two greatest men's Grand Slam winners of all time failing to see eye to eye.

Roger Federer, winner of 20 Slams, says the new Japanese-made Dunlop balls behave differently in cooler night conditions and do not allow players to "out-spin" rivals.

But Rafael Nadal, the 17-time Major winner renowned for his huge top-spin groundstrokes, countered: "I can't say it's a bad ball."

Australian John Millman reckoned "they're a bit heavy" after losing on Wednesday night while his big-mouth countryman Bernard Tomic pulled no punches, saying

they were "dead" and "really s\*\*t" before he lost in the first round.

Tournament director Craig Tiley has defended the change from Wilson balls, claiming he had heard only "positive feedback".

He might have to change his mind after defending champion Federer offered a different opinion on Wednesday.

"Well, they definitely play a touch different to the ones we've had the last couple of years," said the Swiss, going for a third consecutive title and record seventh at Melbourne Park. "At night the spin is not taking off tremendously," he added, noting that the semi-finals and final are played at night.

"It's hard to out-spin guys here. I

just feel like it's really important to have fast-enough courts for night-session conditions. If you keep it slow, slow, the ball doesn't move."

Nadal acknowledged the ball was different but reckons it is "fair for everyone".

"The ball is big. With colder conditions, especially during the night, the ball is bigger," said the Spaniard, who won his sole Australian Open title in 2009.

"Yes, the ball is going a little bit more slow, no? Not the high bounces that sometimes we used to have here. But the ball is what there is. It is fair enough, a good quality ball. I can't complain."

Tomic, meanwhile, was accused of "blackmail and physical threats" by compatriot Lleyton Hewitt in explosive allegations yesterday.

He said Tomic would never again feature in the Davis Cup while he captained Australia. He called

Tomic a clown and said he did not want anything to do with him.

The former world No. 1 was responding to claims this week that he had ruined the national system by thinking only for himself and "doesn't put the players first".

He said Tomic had attempted to blackmail him by demanding a wild card and threatening to refuse to play in the Davis Cup, saying their once-close relationship was over.

"The threats I have received for me and my family, that I've had for a year and a half now, I don't think anyone would reach out to a person that speaks like that," he said.

When asked for details, he replied: "They were blackmail threats and physical."

"For me, it was probably the abuse that I copped from him that in the end I drew a line in the sand, and I haven't spoken to him since."

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

NOT ONE FOR A SPIN

Well, they definitely play a touch different to the ones we've had the last couple of years. At night the spin is not taking off tremendously. It's hard to out-spin guys here.



ROGER FEDERER, Australian Open defending champion, on the new balls.

NOT THE SAME, BUT STILL FAIR

Yes, the ball is going a little bit more slow, no? Not the high bounces that sometimes we used to have here. But the ball is what there is. It is fair enough, a good quality ball. I can't complain.



RAFAEL NADAL, 17-time Slam winner, finding a difference in the balls, but choosing not to nitpick.

## SportsWorld

### Ronaldo wins first silverware with Juve

JEDDAH • Cristiano Ronaldo's second-half goal secured a record eighth Italian Super Cup victory for Juventus as they beat AC Milan 1-0 in the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah on Wednesday.

The trophy, which was being contested outside of Italy for the 10th time, is traditionally a clash between the Italian league and Cup winners, but Milan qualified as Coppa Italia runners-up after Juve clinched the domestic double last season.

It was also Ronaldo's first title with the Italian Serie A champions since his move from Spanish football giants Real Madrid last summer. REUTERS

### Saints fall prey to Lampard's Rams

LONDON • Southampton's dismal football season hit a new low as the Premier League strugglers were dumped out of the FA Cup by second-tier Derby after a penalty shoot-out on Wednesday.

The hosts blew a two-goal lead in the closing stages of the third-round replay and after scores were tied at 2-2 after extra time, Frank Lampard's Derby won 5-3 on penalties.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

### Woods to start his season next week

LOS ANGELES • Tiger Woods will make his 2019 debut at next week's Farmers Insurance Open at Torrey Pines in California, tournament organisers confirmed on Wednesday.

The 43-year-old, who made a successful return to golf last year after missing nearly two years through injury, won the last of his 14 Majors at the course in 2008. Then, he battled to his third US Open triumph in a play-off win over Rocco Mediate.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

### James not match-fit, ready for practice

LOS ANGELES • LeBron James will miss at least two more National Basketball Association games as he recovers from a groin injury but has been cleared to resume practice next week, the Los Angeles Lakers said on Wednesday.

He has not played since limping out of the Christmas Day home victory over the Golden State Warriors.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

### Lauda given green light for discharge

VIENNA • Formula One triple world champion and airline entrepreneur Niki Lauda has been discharged from hospital, the Vienna General Hospital said on Wednesday, after he was treated for influenza following a lung transplant five months ago.

Lauda, a 69-year-old Austrian, had been holidaying in the Spanish island of Ibiza when he was flown to the hospital for treatment earlier this month. REUTERS



Simona Halep stretching to hit a forehand against Sofia Kenin of the USA during their second-round match. The Romanian came through three sets and pain in her thigh to progress. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

**SELECTED DAY 4 RESULTS**

**MEN, 2ND RD**

Novak Djokovic (Srb) bt Jo-Wilfried Tsonga (Fra) 6-3 7-5 6-4, Kei Nishikori (Jpn) bt Ivo Karlovic (Cro) 6-3 7-6 (8-6) 5-7 5-7 7-6 (9-7), Alexander Zverev (Ger) bt Jeremy Chardy (Fra) 7-6 (7-5) 6-4 5-7 6-7 (608) 6-1, Pierre-Hugues Herbert (Fra) bt Chung Hyeon (Kor) 6-2 1-6 6-2 6-4.

**WOMEN, 2ND RD**

Elina Svitolina (Ukr) bt Viktoria Kuzmova (Svk) 6-4 6-1, Naomi Osaka (Jpn) bt Tamara Zidansek (Slo) 6-2 6-4.

# Struggling Halep sets up Venus clash

MELBOURNE • Top seed Simona Halep has played down fitness concerns after she limped into the third round of the Australian Open yesterday following a slight injury during the 6-3, 6-7 (5-7), 6-4 win over Sofia Kenin.

The Romanian has struggled for form and fitness since her first-round defeat at the US Open last August and came into the year's first Grand Slam short of preparation after a back injury ended her 2018 season prematurely.

She was on a five-match losing streak and needed all her determi-

nation to snap that run in her opening clash against Kaia Kanepi when she came back from a set and a break down to clinch the win.

She again had to dig deep against 20-year-old American Kenin, and in the midst of it all clutched the back of her right thigh a few times.

"I feel it in my leg a little bit, it's the muscle," she explained. "I felt it in the second set, but it's because I'm tired. I don't think it's anything dangerous, but we'll see tomorrow morning."

"I couldn't sleep at all that night (after beating Kanepi). I had pain in my legs and it was tough. But I had one day between matches and it was great."

"Every tough match is a positive. But I feel ready to play three hours every day, even if I'm not 100 per cent prepared for this tournament. Day by day I'm getting better."

The next round might not be any easier for Halep. She meets seven-time Grand Slam winner Venus Williams, who beat Frenchwoman Alize Cornet 6-3, 4-6, 6-0.

Halep said: "Tough one. But for sure I'm not going to run that much. Because it's going to finish fast, the points."

"She's a great player, champion. It's always a big challenge for me to face the (Williams) sisters."

"But I will be confident because I played against her, I know how she

plays. I have to be strong."

Venus' sister, Serena, defeated Canadian Eugenie Bouchard 6-2, 6-2 to set up a meeting with unseeded Ukrainian teenager Dayana Yastremska.

"It wasn't an easy match tonight," said the 37-year-old.

"Eugenie's been to the final of Wimbledon (in 2014) and the semi-finals of other Grand Slams."

"So I knew 'Serena, you've got to come out hot, you've got to come out firing'."

REUTERS, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**AUSTRALIAN OPEN**  
Day 5: Singtel TV Ch114/115 & StarHub Ch208/209, 8am & 4pm

SINGAPORE HORSE RACING

**FRIDAY, 18 JANUARY 2019**  
First race starts at 6.20pm

**SUNDAY, 20 JANUARY 2019**  
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## Next 48 Hours

### TODAY

#### BASKETBALL

ABL Alab Pilipinas v Macau Black Bears (StarHub Ch202, 8pm).

#### FOOTBALL

Spanish LaLiga Getafe v Alaves (StarHub Ch213, tomorrow, 3.55am).

#### GOLF

Asian Tour SMBC Singapore Open, Day 2: sessions 1 (11am) & 2 (3pm) – StarHub Ch201. Serapong Course, Sentosa Golf Club, 7.30am.  
European Tour Abu Dhabi C'ship: Day

3 (StarHub Ch204, 4pm).  
LPGA Tour Tournament of Champions: Day 2 (Singtel TV Ch116 & StarHub Ch210, tomorrow, 1am).

#### TENNIS

Australian Open Day 5 (Singtel TV Ch114/115 & StarHub Ch208/209, 8am & 4pm).

### TOMORROW

#### FOOTBALL

English Premier League Wolves v Leicester (8.30pm), Liverpool v

Crystal Palace (11pm), Arsenal v Chelsea (Sunday, 1.30am) – Singtel TV Ch102 & StarHub Ch227. Man United v Brighton (Ch103 & Ch228), Newcastle v Cardiff (Ch104 & Ch229), Southampton v Everton (Ch105 & Ch230), Watford v Burnley (Ch106 & Ch231), Bournemouth v West Ham (Ch107 & Ch232) – 11pm.  
Spanish LaLiga Real Madrid v Sevilla (11.10pm), Huesca v Atletico (Sunday, 1.25am), Celta Vigo v Valencia (Sunday, 3.40am) – StarHub Ch213.

#### GOLF

Asian Tour SMBC Singapore Open:

Day 3 (StarHub Ch201, noon). Serapong Course, Sentosa Golf Club, 7.30am.  
European Tour Abu Dhabi C'ship: Day 4 (StarHub Ch204, 3pm).  
LPGA Tour Tournament of Champions: Day 3 (Singtel TV Ch116 & StarHub Ch210, Sunday, 3am).

#### TENNIS

Australian Open Day 6 (Ch114/115 & Ch208/209, 8am & 4pm).

For latest updates, go to [singtelv.com.sg](http://singtelv.com.sg) & [starhubgo.com](http://starhubgo.com) or check the on-screen TV guide.



# SPORT

## STEPPING STONE TO RIDING SUCCESS

Singapore is base for Danish teenager's world youth equestrian title win

Laura Chia

If Danish rider Annabelle Rehn wins an equestrian Olympic medal in the future, her ride to success can be traced back to Singapore, where she first tasted major victory.

The 13-year-old, training in Singapore since 2017, was named the 2018 FEI World Dressage Challenge youth champion last Friday, beating 115 riders aged 12 to 16 years old from 36 countries, including Australia and Uruguay.

She rode Aros A' Fenris at the Singapore leg, where she scored 75.6 per cent to top Zone 9 (Singapore, India and the Philippines) at the Singapore Turf Club Riding Centre last October. Mairam Alymkulova, from Kyrgyzstan, was second overall on Apachi with 71.538 per cent.

Annabelle is the first in Singapore to win in any category in the Federation Equestre Internationale competition, which aims to give less experienced riders in "more remote countries" the chance to compete internationally. The other levels are Senior I, Senior II, Prix St George and the highest is Intermediate I.

Dressage involves each rider and horse pair performing the same



Annabelle Rehn with her horse Aros A' Fenris at last year's World Dressage Challenge. The two had just two weeks to train together. PHOTO: KARINA LIM

AFFINITY

In a competition, judges judge a lot on the harmony between horse and rider. Aros had to learn a new sequence in two weeks and it normally takes quite a long time to build a partnership with a horse.



AUDREY NJOTO, equestrian coach, on the short timeframe Annabelle had to build a rapport with her horse.

movements in the order set by the competition. Each movement is scored out of 10 and the combined score is converted to a percentage.

When Annabelle received her ranking, she was "over the moon".

"I was nervous before my ride but my horse will be able to sense my nerves, so I had to keep calm," the Dulwich College (Singapore) student told The Straits Times.

"I was really happy receiving my score. I knew it was a good one and was hoping for the big prize.

"Keeping my horse motivated was important so I kept praising him and acknowledging his work by patting him and talking to him," said Annabelle, who was based in Malaysia before moving to Singa-

pore with her parents.

Her coach, Indonesian Audrey Njoto, said the achievement was remarkable given they had trained together for only two weeks.

"In a competition, judges judge a lot on the harmony between horse and rider. Aros had to learn a new sequence in two weeks and it normally takes quite a long time to build a partnership with a horse," said the 2015 SEA Games team dressage gold medalist.

"Annabelle was very mature in her thinking; she knew she had to really understand her horse.

"So we focused on figuring out what system works best for them to communicate well and translate that into the movements required."

President and chief executive of Singapore Turf Club Chong Boo Ching also hailed Annabelle's achievement, saying: "We could not be more proud of her and Aros."

"Annabelle is the first rider based in Singapore to have won first place at any level on the world stage.

"This title is also a great testament to the team of instructors, vets, farriers, groomers and staff at the Riding Centre who tirelessly look after the riders and horse population and maintain our world-class facilities with utmost professionalism.

"I hope that this achievement will motivate and inspire young equestrians in Singapore to continue to achieve better results in regional

and global competitions, as well as encourage youths and families to take up the sport of riding – you will never know when you'll ride all the way to the top."

Instead of taking time off to celebrate, Annabelle has continued training six times a week in the hope of retaining her National Dressage Championships Open title in May.

"In equestrian, you need to be committed and resilient. If I take a break, it's going to take some time to build up my horse again because they will become stiff," said the teenager, who aims to represent Denmark at an Olympics.

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## Harden's second straight blowout night is to little avail

HOUSTON • James Harden's exasperated reaction after the Houston Rockets' 145-142 National Basketball Association overtime defeat on Wednesday was telling.

As Spencer Dinwiddie was mobbed by his Brooklyn Nets teammates, Harden was seen trudging off the Toyota Centre court.

Breathless and weary, the Rockets guard untucked his jersey, took a deep sigh and pushed the cameras away. He had just played 45 minutes, scored a season-high 58 points, but still lost.

"Frustrating. Very frustrating," he said. "We were small... we had a couple of mistakes out there near the end. But give them credit, they made some big shots."

Dinwiddie converted a three-point play with 28 seconds remaining in overtime and the Nets (23-23) erased a seven-point deficit in the extra session to beat the hosts.

The Brooklyn guard was the star of the night, scoring 25 of his 33 points in the fourth period and overtime, including three three-point-

ers in the final 27 seconds of regulation time.

"The man (Harden) had 60 (sic) and we won," Dinwiddie said. "That's big time for a young group."

The Rockets (25-19) made just 23 of an NBA record 70 three-point attempts, bypassing their own mark of 61 against New Orleans in December 2016.

Harden had his second straight season high after scoring 57 in a victory over Memphis on Monday.

He has scored at least 30 points in 18 straight games and reached 40 in

nine of the last 12.

He converted 16 of 34 overall from the field, made 21 of 23 free throws and had 10 rebounds and a half dozen assists.

P.J. Tucker and Eric Gordon, who returned from an eight-game injury hiatus only to depart in the second half, scored 20 points each.

Treveon Graham added 21 points for the Nets while Jarrett Allen recorded a double-double of 20 points and 24 rebounds.

DeMarre Carroll scored 22 points in reserve and teamed up with Din-

widdie for Brooklyn's back-ups to total 63 points.

Houston received 31 points from their bench, 15 from Gerald Green.

Rockets coach Mike D'Antoni admitted that his side had to improve on their physical conditioning, attributing their mistakes to fatigue late on.

"The Nets run really hard through things and we were up 13, you get a little tired and you take a little breather and all of a sudden, they are gone," he said.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, REUTERS

58

Points Houston's James Harden tallied, his fourth 50-point game this season and the 13th of his career.

### Obituaries

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With Deepest Sympathy and Heartfelt Condolences to  
**Mr Ng Thor Huat**  
on the demise of his Beloved Father



**NG CHENG SIONG**  
on 16 January 2019

From:  
The Board of Directors, Management and Staff of



With Deepest Sympathy and Heartfelt Condolences to  
**Mr Thomas Tan**  
(The Executive Chairman & CEO of Kim Heng Offshore & Marine Holdings Limited)  
on the demise of his Beloved Father-in-law



**NG CHENG SIONG**  
on 16 January 2019

From:  
The Board of Directors, Management and Staff of



4th Anniversary  
In Loving Memory Of



**DEBRA WANG LI CHEN**  
called home to the Lord on  
18 January 2015

Dearly missed and fondly remembered by  
Matthew, Jonathan, Sarah, Yi,  
Priscilla, Tee Seng, Kuan Lee, Hui Wen  
& all her loved ones.



**JOE LOW HOE LIM**

Age: 82  
passed away peacefully on 16 January 2019.  
Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

Wife: Lucy Tan

Son:  
Randall Low

Daughter-in-law:  
Livia Tjiang

Grandson:  
Russell Low

Granddaughters:  
Reilly Low  
Reina Low

Caregiver:  
Juvilyn

And all relatives and friends.

Body is resting at Blk 503A Bedok North St 3  
S'pore 460504 (Multi-Purpose Hall).  
Cortege will leave on 20 January 2019 (Sunday)  
at 12.40pm for Mandai Crematorium Hall 2  
for cremation at 1.40pm.



# life

**D** **BIG ON BLUE**  
The trendiest watch colour this year  
**D3**

Today is a most unusual day, because we have never lived it before; we will never live it again; it is the only day we have.

— William Arthur Ward

Live more.  
Bank less 

## Dress up for CNY

Chinese New Year is the season to show off some new threads when you visit family and friends. But dressing up does not mean you have to go for a loud red outfit.

The Straits Times lays out three stylish ways you can dress to impress this festive season



Melissa Heng

1

### Update the classics

Chinese New Year is the perfect time to wear traditional outfits. But instead of a standard cheongsam or shirt with Chinese knot buttons, opt for pieces with modern prints or one or two traditional elements.

Fashion stylist Jenine Oh, 28, says traditional cheongsams typically have cap sleeves which look

unflattering on most women. "Modern cheongsams come with longer sleeves or are sleeveless. This is usually more flattering for the figure."

And instead of the traditional Chinese brocade pattern, experiment with an abstract or colourful print.

Ms Oh says: "Stay away from classic silk fabric with

oriental embroideries and motifs such as porcelain flora and dragons. These are elements associated with traditional cheongsam and tend to make people look more mature."

melheng@sph.com.sg

#### For her

1



1. Chilli print cheongsam, \$299, from Peter Kor, available at Robinsons

2. Min Mandarin cheongsam, \$230, from The Missing Piece

3. Slytherin drop earrings, \$18, from Diving For Pearls

4. Everyday necklace, \$242.26, from Eden + Ellie

5. Lucia clutch, \$139, from Mar Y Sol, available at Soon Lee

6. Slingback heels, \$139, from Aldo

3



2



4



5



6



An Oriental-inspired outfit (\$300) from The Missing Piece, featuring a boxy-cut linen top and a high-waisted skirt with guipure lace.

PHOTOS: ALDO, COTTON ON, DIVING FOR PEARLS, EDEN + ELLIE, FRESHLY PRESSED, H&M, ONLEWO, PICARD, ROBINSONS, SOON LEE, THE MISSING PIECE

#### For him

1



2



1. Singa-flora men's shirt, \$190, from Onlewo

2. Knee-length shorts, \$17.95, from H&M

3. Smooth operator sunglasses, \$14.99, from Cotton On

4. Medium leather clutch, \$167.29, from Picard

5. Kueh tutu socks, \$12, from Freshly Pressed

6. Brown leather shoes, \$695, from Car Shoe, available at Robinsons

3



4



5



6



MORE on D2



FROM D1

## 2

### Wear red as an accent

While red is seen as an auspicious hue and a bold red outfit can turn heads (in the right way) at times, the colour can become overwhelming against a backdrop

#### For her

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



1. Beige jumpsuit with buttons, \$59.90, from Zara

2. Salsa drop earrings, \$10, from Threeronetwofive

3. Chan Chan mini crossbody bag, \$350, from Rabeanco

4. Chromatic interlude minuet earrings, \$890, from State Property, available at Tangs

5. Grandiflora knotted top, \$139, from d.d Collective, available at Robinsons

6. Belted wide legged pants, \$49.90, from Uniqlo

7. Scarf wrap ankle strap platforms, \$38.30, from Charles & Keith

of similarly coloured decor. Fashion stylist Karin Tan, 29, says one should use the bright shade as a pop of colour in the look rather than the main focus. "A full head-to-toe red outfit is a definite no. Instead, choose red accessories or a piece of clothing that has a hint of red, either as a panel detail or a print in red on a lighter base colour." Neutral earth tones or light denim pieces often go well with red or orange shades. Avoid pairing red with solid white pieces as you may look like you are going for the National Day Parade.

## 3

### Look matchy, not tacky

Okay, we get it. It is a special occasion and you want to dress as a couple. But there is a fine line between cute and cheesy when it comes to matchy-matchy dressing.

#### For her

1



2



3



4



5



6



1. Ruffled shoulder floral jumpsuit, \$49, from Pomelo

2. Prana loafers, \$70, from Melissa

3. Chryspearly drop earrings, \$15.90, from Thrifty Thieves

4. Mini tote with handle, \$29.90, from Zara

5. Rayon utility dress, \$119, from Beyond The Vines

6. Canvas shoulder bag, \$241, from Esemble, available at Kapok

Still, there are ways that couple outfits can complement each other and look independently stylish at the same time. To avoid looking tacky, do not wear the exact same piece, silhouette or pattern, Ms Jenine Oh says. "An easy solution is to match the colour or shade of your outfits, but select different patterns or styles." Wearing coordinated outfits also does not mean that both parties have to go for the same colours throughout. Mr Karin Tan says: "If one person is wearing a particular colour, the other can have an accessory, like a bag or shoes, in the same shade."

#### For him

1



2



3



4



5



6



1. Multi-textured revere shirt, \$79.90, from Topman

2. Filled optic socks, \$14.90, from Happy Socks, available at Robinsons

3. Satay punny pouch, \$9.90, from Love SG

4. Suede buckle moccasins, \$103.90, from Pedro

5. Pierce grey chinos, \$139, from Bruun & Stengade, available at Robinsons

6. Casual lace-up sneakers, \$99.90, from Pedro

PHOTOS: CHARLES & KEITH, ONLEWO, LOVE SG, PEDRO, PULL & BEAR, RABEANCO, ROBINSONS, TANGS, THREERONETWOFIVE, TOPMAN, UNIQLO, ZARA

#### For him

1



2



3



4



5



6



1. Striped shirt, \$29.90, from Zara

2. Stretchable bermudas, \$49.90, from Gus Bear, available at OG

3. Canvas wingtip shoe, \$92, from YMC, available at Kapok

4. Twill shirt with vertical stripes, \$55.90, from Pull & Bear

5. Oregon sunglasses, \$14.99, from Cotton On

6. Neoprene case, \$16.90, from The Animal Project

PHOTOS: CHONG JUN LIANG, COTTON ON, KAPOK, MELISSA, OG, POMELO, PULL & BEAR, THE ANIMAL PROJECT, ZARA

# China finding its way in the fashion world

#### Gordon Ng

French ruler of the 19th century, Napoleon Bonaparte, supposedly said: "Let China sleep, for when she wakes, she will shake the world."

China has well and truly woken and the force of its commercial spending power is heavily felt in fashion.

The behemoth country contributes more than 500 billion yuan (\$510 billion) in luxury spending – nearly a third of the global market. Which begs the question: Why is the Chinese fashion scene still so weak?

#### GLOBALISATION AND ANGLO-CENTRICITY

A simple but sweeping answer is a Western cultural hegemony that persists even as China catches up with the United States and Europe.

The Chinese middle and upper class, who pursue a career in fashion, are able to afford training at top schools, such as London's

Central Saint Martins and New York's Parsons School of Design, and hanker for a spot in these established institutions.

What that means is aesthetic and technical training rooted in Western principles, resulting in current generations of Chinese design talent focused on a fusion of East and West aesthetics.

It is useless, perhaps, to cling to a Platonic ideal of Chinese – or indeed Asian – dress rooted in tradition.

What works instead is a non-literal approach that embraces and celebrates Chinese tradition while realistically weaving in the ubiquity of the way people dress today.

#### RENDITIONS OF TRADITION

For the traditional, look no further than home-grown cheongsam queen Priscilla Shunmugam. Her Ong Shunmugam label has won praise among the local fashion set for its modern take on the traditional Chinese dress.

The Missing Piece is another local

brand with a contemporary vision. The shapes are less classical, using a range of modern silhouettes – jumpsuits and baby-doll dresses, for example – fused with embellishments and prints that draw from the East.

The men have it even easier: Key styles like the Mao jacket and Tang suit have been deconstructed and co-opted by a host of fashion designers.

Shanghai Tang, an international mainstay of East-meets-West luxury fashion, has seasonal and permanent collections that comfortably straddle occasion and daily wear.

Everywhere else, you will find that Mandarin collars have entered the shirting mainstream and utility jackets echo both the aesthetic and philosophy of the Mao suit.

#### RIGHT STEPS

Less reverence and tradition from Asian designers, and more sensitivity and respect from the West, is likely the best way forward now.

Luxury fashion remains a euro-centric industry, except today, all brands have their sights firmly trained on Chinese money.

In chasing this customer's dollar, a more sensitive approach would work.

One such way is for luxury brands to work actively with Chinese opinion leaders and trendsetters – who almost certainly have a better feel of consumer sentiment and tastes on the ground.

Mr Bags, one of China's pre-eminent fashion bloggers, has so far collaborated with brands such as Montblanc, Tod's, Givenchy, Burberry and Chloe.

His most recent is a capsule collection of bags for French leather house Longchamp, reinterpreting its best-selling Le Pliage style with Year of the Pig motifs.

His previous project with Italian shoemaker Tod's saw him sell a head-spinning 3.24 million yuan worth of product in six minutes.

No wonder Mr Diego Della Valle, the owner of Tod's, wanted to "part-

ner again and strengthen our valuable relationship".

For Chinese fashion designers, however, a freer range of expression would be ideal. Remember that when the Japanese designers Rei Kawakubo and Yohji Yamamoto debuted their collections in Paris in the 1980s, their funereal aesthetic had little to no immediate ties to their ethnicities.

The same with the Antwerp Six, the gang of Belgian mavericks who upended international expectations – not of a specific, identifiable Belgian style, but by the impressive range of creativity, difference and talent among the six. It is only fair to take that approach with the Chinese too.

#### THE ONES TO WATCH

There are already promising Chinese talents who are working with this approach in mind, obliquely but subtly referencing their cultures.

Sean Suen, a Beijing-based designer, is now a regular on the men's schedule in Paris Fashion Week. His work is modern and considered, drawing from influences as diverse as art, film and architecture.

For Fall 2018, he drew from the 1987 Bernardo Bertolucci film The Last Emperor, itself an Italian auteur's interpretation of the story of

Puyi, the final monarch in Chinese history.

Though Suen's designs do not explicitly espouse race, one can find suggestions of it in the languid silhouettes and shapes, and details such as prints that evoke Chinese silk jacquards.

Another such brand is Commission, a fledgling label based in New York. Though founded by designers of Korean and Vietnamese heritage, the aesthetic they tap is of women's office wear in the 1980s.

Theirs is an amalgamation of Asian experience during a decade in which Western style codes were assimilated, drawn from the fashion of their own mothers and twisted with contemporary sensuality. In other words, the clothes are invariably familiar yet avoid pastiche and nostalgia.

Perhaps China's fashion is not weak. It may be simply young and finding its own feet now as a modern nation and culture.

Like the country itself, its fashion is figuring out its place in the world. Give the oldest continuous civilisation some time. Just imagine the shock of finding out you are young again after more than 3,000 years of history.

• Gordon Ng is a freelance fashion writer.



Five interesting timepieces at the Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie



**HERMES ARCEAU L'HEURE DE LA LUNE**  
€23,000 (\$\$35,500)

A head-turning double moon-phase watch, this Hermes timepiece features two stationary mother-of-pearl moons, above which hovers a set of floating dials to tell the time and date.

The dials rotate around once in 59 days to show the moon phases of the northern and southern hemispheres.

There are two versions of this 43mm watch. One has a meteorite dial and the other an aventurine one. Both have white gold cases, are fitted with the Hermes calibre H1837 and are limited to 100 pieces each.



**PANERAI SUBMERSIBLE CHRONO GUILLAUME NERY EDITION (PAM00982)**  
€18,900 (\$\$29,200)

This watch celebrates the brand's collaboration with French freediving champion Guillaume Nery, who broke four world records.

It boasts a titanium case with a unidirectional rotating dive scale bezel fashioned out of blue ceramic. The dial has a shark-grey textured background and comes with luminous white markers that allow easy reading in the dark. Complementing the rugged good looks of the sturdy chronograph with a flyback function is a blue rubber strap.

Water-resistant up to 300m, it is powered by the in-house P.9100 calibre. The screwback bears Nery's signature and his final record of 126m.



**JAEGER-LECOULTRE MASTER ULTRA THIN MOON ENAMEL**  
€30,000 (\$\$46,300)

Boasting a thin 39mm case made from white gold, this beauty is just 10.04mm thick and is powered by the in-house Calibre 925.

Its most attractive feature is its guilloche enamel dial in a stunning shade of blue, executed by artisans trained in Le Sentier, Switzerland, the home of Jaeger-LeCoultre. Guilloche is the art of engraving intricate patterns on watch parts such as dials and cases.

Limited to 100 pieces, it comes with a blue alligator strap and has a power reserve of more than 70 hours.



**RICHARD MILLE BONBON COLLECTION**  
From US\$122,500 (\$\$166,000) to US\$158,000

There are 10 models in this colourful and whimsical collection, each produced in an edition of 30 pieces.

Designed by artistic director Cecile Guenat, they feature candies, pastries and fruits and are based on three of the brand's iconic models: the RM07-03, RM16-01 and RM37-01.

There are two lines: Fruits (six models) and Sweets (four models). The miniature sculptures – from liquorice to lollipops to candied lemons – in the watches are made from powdered enamel and fine sand and painted in acrylic and lacquered by hand.

The model featured here is the RM37-01 Cerise.

Minutes&Seconds

# DIVING INTO BLUE

Playful designs, new composite materials and watches in blue hues were highlights at the Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie

Wong Kim Hoh  
In Geneva

Blue is the new black.

At least in the world of watches it is, if offerings at the Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie (SIHH) in Geneva were any indication.

What started out as a trend a couple of years ago has taken root and there was no escaping the colour and its various hues – aquamarine, azure, cerulean and indigo – at the four-day watch fair which featured 35 exhibitors and ended yesterday.

Brands from Vacheron Constantin and Audemars Piguet to Jaeger-LeCoultre and Baume & Mercier were among those taking on the colour, splashing it on the straps and dials of their timepieces.

Jaeger-LeCoultre, for instance, unveiled a Master Ultra Thin Moon Enamel watch which features a guilloche enamelled midnight blue dial, while A. Lange & Sohne's 25th anniversary edition of its iconic Lange 1 watch boasts a deep-blue strap with matching indices and striking blue hands.

The use of new materials was another noticeable trend at the

SIHH, a barometer of all that is new and fashionable in the watch world. IWC used ceratanium – a hybrid material which boasts the hardness and scratch-resistance of ceramic and the lightweight and corrosion-resistant properties of titanium – for the first time in a pilot's watch in a new Top Gun collection.

Panerai released several models with cases and bezels made from carbotech, a composite material based on carbon fibre.

Not to be outdone, Ulysse Nardin unveiled new watches from its Freak family which are fashioned from carbonium, another carbon-fibre material used in the aeronautical industry.

This year's SIHH also saw a strong showing of complex mechanical movements.

The perpetual calendar – a sophisticated horological mechanism that knows not only the number of days in each month, but also the year so



Ulysse Nardin worked with Italian artist Milo Manara to create handpainted timepieces telling the story of a woman who finds love with a mermaid. PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

it can automatically adjust for leap years – was especially popular, with almost every brand trotting out one.

Audemars Piguet, for instance, included a perpetual calendar in its new Code 11.59 collection. Ditto Montblanc, which introduced one in its Heritage range.

Other brands took it one step further. Vacheron Constantin turned heads with its Traditionnelle Twin Beat, which has a power reserve of more than 65 days on standby mode, thanks to its two balance wheels. This technical feat cuts out the need to reset the watch even if it is unworn for two months.

The Jaeger-LeCoultre Master Grande Tradition Gyrotourbillon Westminster Perpetuel, meanwhile, boasts multiple haute horological complications, including a minute repeater which plays the chime of Big Ben in London.

Besides flexing their technical muscle, brands also appeared more adventurous this year.

Richard Mille kicked into playful gear, releasing a colourful and whimsical 10-piece series of candy-inspired timepieces it named the Bonbon collection.

Ulysse Nardin eschewed sweetness for sauciness, working with Italian erotic comic artist Milo Manara to create a series of erotic watches. The handpainted timepieces tell the story of a woman who finds love and passion with a mermaid.

The willingness of maisons to take risks hints at the return of optimism to an industry which has weathered some turbulence in the last few years.

Indeed, figures for global Swiss

watch exports rose 3.9 per cent last November to 2.06 billion Swiss francs (\$2.8 billion), the first time export value has crossed the two-billion mark in three years.

Other than an interesting crop of watches, this year's SIHH – which saw a large turnout of celebrities including actors Hugh Jackman and Bradley Cooper and model Karolina Kurkova – was significant for other reasons.

It marked the last time the event would be held in January. Starting next year, SIHH will take place in late April, followed immediately by the other big watch fair, Baselworld.

It was also the last outing for Richard Mille and Audemars Piguet, which felt the event no longer serves their strategic needs.

Other brands, however, are resolutely staying put.

Mr Wilhelm Schmid, head honcho of A. Lange & Sohne, said: "Where else on this globe can I find, within four days, all important journalists, important retailers and a lot of important customers and see my competitive environment without moving?"

kimhoh@sph.com.sg



**VACHERON CONSTANTIN TRADITIONNELLE TWIN BEAT PERPETUAL CALENDAR**  
\$308,000

The perpetual calendar is a marvellous and wondrous mechanism to own, but if it should run down, resetting the calendar indications, including the age and phase of the moon, could be a task beyond watch lovers.

The Traditionnelle Twin Beat Perpetual Calendar – one of the most talked-about pieces at this year's SIHH – has a neat solution to this problem. It can function on active mode, which beats at a frequency of 36,000 vibrations per hour (vph), or it can be put into standby mode, with the frequency slowed down to 8,640vph. The standby mode has a power reserve of more than 65 days.

PHOTOS: JAEGER-LECOULTRE, JOEL VON ALLMEN, PANERAI, RICHARD MILLE, VAC



Model Karolina Kurkova at IWC's launch of its new pilot's watches at the Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie in Geneva on Tuesday. PHOTO: IWC

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GIGS

Sangeetha Sings Sinatra

Hear local singer and actress Rebekah Sangeetha Dorai's interpretations of Frank Sinatra classics, such as Come Fly With Me, Fly Me To The Moon, I've Got You Under My Skin and My Way.  
**WHERE:** Esplanade Recital Studio, 1 Esplanade Drive **MRT:** Esplanade/ City Hall **WHEN:** Today, 7.30pm **ADMISSION:** \$35 (students: \$15) **INFO:** www.esplanade.com

Rene Ann Wong: Solo Esplanade Debut

Pop-rock singer-songwriter Rene Ann Wong makes her Esplanade solo debut, in which she will perform her single, Lonely, which was released in April last year, as well as new material to be released this year. The 22-year-old has been performing since she was 14 and won first place in Noise Singapore's The Great Singapore Replay Open Call in 2017.  
**WHERE:** Esplanade Forecourt Garden (near Jubilee Bridge), 1 Esplanade Drive **MRT:** Esplanade/ City Hall **WHEN:** Jan 25, 8.15pm **ADMISSION:** Free **INFO:** www.esplanade.com

Daniel Sid: From Busker To Bigger Stage

Up-and-coming artist Daniel Sid, 23, has taken his music from the streets to bigger stages here and will soon go international. He will make his debut at the Esplanade and launch his first EP soon.  
**WHERE:** Esplanade Forecourt Garden (near Jubilee Bridge), 1 Esplanade Drive **MRT:** Esplanade/ City Hall **WHEN:** Jan 26, 6.30 & 7.45pm **ADMISSION:** Free **INFO:** www.esplanade.com

Banana Suicide Forest

Progressive metal quintet Banana Suicide Forest were formed in 2016 by current music and audio technology students at Singapore Polytechnic. The band – comprising vocalist Josias Lim, guitarists Dominic Yuan and Michelle Quek, bassist Kwa Jia Xuan, and drummer Gavin Loo – combine technical and melodic chordal-driven guitar riffs with syncopated basslines and drum parts.  
**WHERE:** Esplanade Concourse, 1 Esplanade Drive **MRT:** Esplanade/ City Hall **WHEN:** Jan 29, 7pm **ADMISSION:** Free **INFO:** www.esplanade.com

Rock In 60 Minutes

The Singapore Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Jacomo Bairos and accompanied by electric guitarists Nick Omiccioli and Paul Cesarczyk, will perform explosive, rock-infused, electric and genre-bending music from the likes of Frank Zappa, Radiohead and Daft Punk.  
**WHERE:** Esplanade Concert Hall, 1 Esplanade Drive **MRT:** Esplanade/ City Hall **WHEN:** Jan 31, 7.30pm **ADMISSION:** \$18 - \$48 **TEL:** 6348-5555 **INFO:** www.sistic.com.sg

CHARITY

Speaker Tan Chuan-Jin's Photo Exhibition

Speaker of Parliament Tan Chuan-Jin is working with 13 charities, Hope Initiative Alliance, Far East Organisation and Arts@work to raise funds for vulnerable communities here and overseas. Mr Tan's latest personal photography project, named Our Place In The World, showcases images of his travels over the years. There will be an exhibition of the photos next month and well-wishers can buy prints of the images in various forms, from postcards (\$50 for 15 postcards in a folder) to a Special Photo Book Set and Premium Photo Book Set (\$1,000 and \$5,000 each respectively, autographed by Mr Tan). Exclusive Metal Prints (\$10,000 each) will be autographed and personally presented by Mr Tan during a high-tea session. The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund is among the charities involved.  
**WHERE:** Level 2 Concourse, Far East Plaza, 14 Scotts Road **MRT:** Orchard **WHEN:** Feb 1 - 3, 7 - 28: 11am - 7pm; Feb 4: 11am - 3pm **ADMISSION:** Free **INFO:** www.spmf.org.sg

TALKS

Mindfulness With Flowers

Through the use of flowers, one can cultivate greater awareness of one's surroundings. In this workshop, learn

how to appreciate the beauty of flowers through smell, sight, touch.  
**WHERE:** Lululemon, 79 Duxton Road **MRT:** Tanjong Pagar **WHEN:** Tomorrow & Jan 26, 2 - 3.30pm **ADMISSION:** \$50 (includes materials), register at www.thegreenroom.com.sg/ workshop

DigiMUSE Presents: Artist Talks

Local and international artists will share their experiences using new technologies to advance their creative practices and perspectives on curating tech-art. The speakers are Hiroaki Umeda, Justine Emard, Yang Derong, Galina Mihaleva, Randy Chan and The Little Arts Academy artists.  
**WHERE:** Basement & Level 1, National Museum of Singapore, 93 Stamford Road **MRT:** Bras Basah/ Dhoby Ghaut **WHEN:** Tomorrow (3, 4 & 5pm), Jan 25 (5 & 6pm) & Jan 26 (5pm) **ADMISSION:** Free, for more information & to register, go to digimuse2019.peatix.com

Volunteering For YMCA Overseas Missions

YMCA of Singapore, which regularly organises overseas volunteering trips to neighbouring countries under the International Service Programmes, is holding a session in which facilitators will share their volunteering

experience. Participants can also find out how they can be involved in upcoming trips.

**WHERE:** Room 205, Level 2, YMCA of Singapore, 1 Orchard Road **MRT:** Dhoby Ghaut **WHEN:** Thu, 7pm **ADMISSION:** Free, sign up at tinyurl.com/ISP-InfoSession **TEL:** 6586-2338 **INFO:** E-mail chenyin@ymca.org.sg

Pig Tales For Chinese New Year

With the Year of the Pig approaching, learn about the forms and symbolisms pigs have taken in Asian and South-east Asian art and history – from the pig-headed house god of ancient Tibet to one of China's most beloved literary figures in the classic, Journey To The West. The speaker, Patricia Bjaaland Welch, pursued her love of Chinese history, art and religion at Boston University and became a university lecturer teaching the same subjects. She has also published five books, including Chinese Art: A Guide To Motifs And Visual Imagery.  
**WHERE:** Ngee Ann Auditorium, Asian Civilisations Museum, 1 Empress Place **MRT:** Raffles Place **WHEN:** Jan 28, 11am **ADMISSION:** Free **TEL:** 6337-3685 **INFO:** www.fom.sg

Gigs Picks

Boon Chan Media Correspondent recommends



GLEN WEE'S SOUNDS IN THE CITY ALBUM LAUNCH

Sounds In The City is the debut solo album of Singapore-born, Melbourne-based singer-songwriter Glen Wee.  
He says: "I like to think of the album as a little log book... of all my trials in this wonderful, continuous journey called life."  
A second show at 1pm has been added after the 3pm gig sold out.  
**WHERE:** 3 Kim Chuan Lane, 03-01 **MRT:** Tai Seng **WHEN:** Tomorrow, 1 and 3pm (sold out) **ADMISSION:** \$25 from soundsinthecity2.peatix.com

PHOTOS:  
JASMINE CHOONG,  
MODE  
ENTERTAINMENT  
VIZPRO, STFILE

BELINDA CARLISLE RUNAWAY HORSES 30TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR SINGAPORE

Runaway Horses, the third solo album from American singer Belinda Carlisle, was released in 1989. It came on the heels of the best-selling Heaven On Earth (1987) and spawned a clutch of pop hits, including Leave A Light On For Me and the title track.  
**WHERE:** The Star Theatre, 04-01 The Star Performing Arts Centre, 1 Vista Exchange Green **MRT:** Buona Vista **WHEN:** April 6, 8pm **ADMISSION:** \$108 to \$188 with limited VIP packages at \$428 from Sistic (call 6348-5555 or go to www.sistic.com.sg)



CAI QIN SINGAPORE CONCERT

Veteran Taiwanese singer Tsai Chin is back to serenade fans in her signature rich voice, with classic hits such as The Spirit Of Your Eyes.  
She will also take on songs by other singers, such as the late Zhou Xuan's Shanghai Nights and the late Teresa

Teng's The Moon Represents My Heart.  
**WHERE:** The Star Theatre, 04-01 The Star Performing Arts Centre, 1 Vista Exchange Green **MRT:** Buona Vista **WHEN:** Tomorrow, 8pm **ADMISSION:** \$88 to \$228 from Sistic



THE X'SSEMBLY COMPILATION ALBUM LAUNCH

The XS Collective, who includes hip-hop musicians such as (above from left) Young, Mean and Azrael, is one of the longest-running rap coalitions in the local hip-hop scene. Its first release, School For X'Scape

Artists, was in 2007. Its third compilation album, The X'Ssembly, features tracks such as Lion City Axe Gang.  
**WHERE:** Canvas Club, B1-01 The Riverwalk, 20 Upper Circular Road **MRT:** Clarke Quay **WHEN:** Today, 9pm **ADMISSION:** \$15 at the door

CLASSES

Personalised Make-up Workshop

Learn how to be your own make-up artist and use the best shades for your skin tone in this workshop. Topics include the types and benefits of make-up, as well as face shapes and contours.  
**WHERE:** 38 Jalan Pemimpin **MRT:** Marymount **WHEN:** Tomorrow, 2 - 4pm **ADMISSION:** Free, register at eventbrite.sg

Pineapple Tart Workshop

Chinatown Festivals is holding a pineapple-tart workshop in which participants can learn to make one of the most popular Chinese New Year treats.  
**WHERE:** Kreta Ayer Community Club, 28 Kreta Ayer Road **MRT:** Outram Park **WHEN:** Jan 27, 10am - 1pm **ADMISSION:** \$5 (for up to five people); tickets on sale at Kreta Ayer CC (tel: 6222-3597) & Kim Seng CC (tel: 6272-3878) **INFO:** tinyurl.com/pinetarts2019

Wonders Of The Voice – Vonder Training Course

Learn to project, pronounce, inflect, emote, modulate, breathe right for vocal resonance, switch your accent or neutralise it to sound more

international. Bring characters alive with only your voice. Practise script analysis and try various voiceover and voice-acting lines.

**WHERE:** Changi Simei Community Building, 10 Simei Street 2 **MRT:** Simei **WHEN:** Jan 27, 10am - 5.30pm **ADMISSION:** \$240 - \$250 (Skills Future claimable), sign up by Jan 20 at www.onepa.sg/class/details/c026691126 **INFO:** wondersofthevoice.com

ST English Masterclass (The Executive Edition Special: Creative Writing)

This course is conducted by Felix Cheong, who has published 13 books across different genres, from poetry to short stories. The recipient of the Young Artist award has worked in the media industry for more than 20 years and teaches journalism at the University of Newcastle and Murdoch University. He will cover topics such as the basics of narrative writing, generating story ideas; creating characters, plots, twists and endings; turning life experience into stories; and the publishing process.  
**WHERE:** SPH News Centre, 1000 Toa Payoh North **MRT:** Braddell **WHEN:** Jan 30, Feb 21; 10am - 6pm (lunch provided) **ADMISSION:** \$499 a person, sign up at stskills.sg **TEL:** 6319-5076 **INFO:** E-mail stmasterclass@sph.com.sg



## FOOD

### PROMOTIONS

#### Penang Classics At Edge

Chef de cuisine Howard Leong pays homage to his home town of Penang with a selection of street food that is available during dinner for a limited time at Pan Pacific Singapore's Edge. Highlights include Mamak Chicken and Penang-style bubur cha cha. **WHERE:** Level 3 Pan Pacific Singapore, 7 Raffles Boulevard **MRT:** Promenade **WHEN:** Till Jan 27, 6.30 - 10.30pm **PRICE:** \$88++ an adult, \$44 a child (aged six to 12) **TEL:** 6826-8240 **INFO:** E-mail dining.ppsin@panpacific.com

#### Burger Number Five At 25 Degrees

25 Degrees Singapore has brought Burger Number Five from 25 Degrees Los Angeles, which is available till the end of next month. The towering Roosevelt original features a juicy, all-American beef patty, smoky pastrami, melted baby Swiss cheese and housemade Thousand Island sauce, stacked with onion rings and held together by two brioche buns. **WHERE:** Level 1 Hotel G, 200 Middle Road **MRT:** Bencoolen/Bugis **WHEN:** 11 - 3am (till Feb 28) **PRICE:** \$18++ **TEL:** 6809-7990 **INFO:** facebook.com/25DegreesSG

#### Home Chefs Cook-Out

Two home chefs will battle it out to prepare a starter, a main course and a dessert. Diners get to watch, mingle and taste the dishes. Proceeds will go towards supporting underprivileged women in their back-to-work journeys with supporting programmes run by Daughters of Tomorrow. **WHERE:** Cookyn Inc, HomeTeam NS-JOM @ Balestier, 31 Ah Hood Road **MRT:** Toa Payoh **WHEN:** Thu, 6 - 10pm **PRICE:** \$194.69 a person; tickets & details at kitchenmove.eventbrite.sg

### CHINESE NEW YEAR

#### Swensen's Fortune 18 Yu Sheng, Tong Tong Qiang Cake

Swensen's has brought back its Fortune 18 Yu Sheng and introduced a new celebratory ice cream cake called Tong Tong Qiang. The Fortune 18 Yu Sheng (\$23.90 for dine-in for two to four; \$36.90 for takeaway for four to six) comprises 18 ingredients such as fresh greens and pomelo, preserved white and brown melon, crispy wonton skin, smoked salmon slivers and plum sauce. The Tong Tong Qiang Neapolitan-flavoured ice cream cake (1kg, \$68.80 for dine-in or takeaway) features a lion head made with fondant. **WHERE:** Swensen's or Earle Swensen's outlets islandwide **WHEN:** Till Feb 19 **PRICE:** \$23.90 - \$68.80 **INFO:** Go to swensens.com.sg to buy online

#### Sunlife Pineapple Tarts, Almond Sticks

Sunlife Durian Puffs & Pastries has goodies for Chinese New Year. Its Premium Pineapple Tarts (\$8.80 for 12 pieces; \$18.80 for 28 pieces) and Almond Sticks (\$12.80 for 15 pieces) are available at its outlets and online (sunlifepastries.com).

### FoodPicks

#### Rebecca Lynne Tan [straitstimesfood.com](http://straitstimesfood.com) editor recommends

#### MODERN SUSHI BAR AND HIGHBALL DEN IN STANLEY STREET

Chi Kinjo is the latest restaurant and bar by the team behind Sum Yi Tai and Mona Lounge in Boon Tat Street and Eliza Cocktail Bar in Telok Ayer Street. It has fun, relaxed and cheeky vibes with delicious eats and fabulous drinks, which make for a great night out with friends or after-work drinks with colleagues.

It serves only dinner and drinks for now, but come Monday, it will also be open for lunch – think modern bento boxes and large, flat sushi rolls called sushi sandwiches.

So far, I like everything I have tried. Its Ming Dynasty Tofu (\$12) – housemade tofu with crunchy water chestnut topped with a creamy century egg sauce, chunks of crab and shredded century egg – is one of the best versions of this dish I have had.

The aburi nigiri sushi (\$12 for two sushi) – from salmon and foie gras to truffle scallop – are tasty little morsels that you will want to keep eating. There are also sushi rolls (right) with fillings such as spicy tuna (\$16) and prawn tempura with mentai mayonnaise (\$20).

Expect a well-curated selection of sake and a wide range of highballs, including a shisho sake Shisho Watermelon highball (\$14) and a Gin & Ginger highball (\$14), made with Tanqueray, ginger, lime mint and ginger beer.

**WHERE:** Chi Kinjo, 29 Stanley Street **MRT:** Telok Ayer **OPEN:** 5pm to 1am (Mondays to Saturdays), closed on Sundays. The kitchen closes at 10pm (Mondays to Wednesdays) and 10.45pm (Thursdays to Saturdays)



PHOTOS: CHI KINJO, JANICE WONG, REBECCA LYNNE TAN



#### CNY SNACKS BY JANICE WONG

It can be tough to decide which Chinese New Year snacks are worth the calories. This year, I cannot get enough of the peanut cookies (\$25 a jar with 40 cookies) by pastry chef Janice Wong, who runs an eponymous patisserie and chocolaterie.

The cookies crumble and melt in your mouth. I love the salty savouriness too. I finished four of these cookies in one sitting.

The child in me also likes the strawberry chocolate love letters (\$18) – a giant, fancier and more sophisticated inside-out version of

Glico's strawberry Pocky pretzels. Here, each love letter roll is filled with a generous amount of strawberry chocolate.

The snacks are available while stocks last, until Feb 19.

**WHERE:** Janice Wong Singapore at B1-K28 Paragon, 290 Orchard Road; and B1-48 Raffles City, 252 North Bridge Road **MRT:** Orchard/City Hall **OPEN:** Paragon, 10am to 9pm daily; Raffles City, 10am to 10pm daily. Both shops close at 6pm on Feb 4 and are closed on Feb 5 **INFO:** Order online at [www.janicewong.online](http://www.janicewong.online), e-mail [info@janicewong.com.sg](mailto:info@janicewong.com.sg) or go to [www.janicewong.com.sg](http://www.janicewong.com.sg)

#### REVAMPED ORCHARD CAFE

The Orchard Cafe at Orchard Hotel Singapore has been renovated. The interior is now sleeker and the food, more enticing. The international buffet spread boasts everything from sashimi and sushi to seafood and double-boiled soup to Indian fare and Nonya kueh.

The menu changes every day. When I dined there earlier this week, there was Japanese wagyu ribeye steak at the grill station, cooked a perfect medium-rare. It is the first time I have had such good quality beef at a hotel buffet lunch.

Another highlight is the sambal section, which boasts eight styles of sambal from sambal belachan to sambal hijau, made with green chillies. Eat them with the various types of crackers.

The live noodle station's daily offering ranges from bak chor mee to Penang curry noodles, with Thai boat noodles and tom yum noodles soon to be included on the list.

The buffet may sometimes include a deliciously simple dish of noodles tossed in scallion oil that goes great with the daily roast meats selection, supplied by Cantonese restaurant Hua Ting, which is at the same hotel.

The soft-serve ice cream station churns out flavours such as Horlicks and pandan kaya. Help yourself to sprinkles, chocolate chips, cookie crumble and the works. **WHERE:** The Orchard Cafe, Orchard Hotel Singapore, 442 Orchard Road **MRT:** Orchard **OPEN:** 6 to 10.30am daily (breakfast), noon to 2.30pm daily (lunch), 6 to 10pm daily (dinner) **PRICE:** \$32 (breakfast), \$58 (weekday lunch), \$62 (weekend lunch), \$78 (dinner from Mondays to Thursdays), \$88 (dinner on Fridays and weekends) **TEL:** 6734-7766 **INFO:** [www.orchardhotel.com.sg](http://www.orchardhotel.com.sg)



#### TOA PAYOH BAK CHOR MEE STALL RELOCATES

To my fellow bak chor mee lovers, I thought I had better get the word out: Lai Heng Mushroom Minced Meat Noodle has relocated from Toa Payoh Lorong 6 to a coffee shop in Toa Payoh Lorong 4.

The stall opened at its new location at the beginning of last month. Compared with the previous location, this coffee shop is surrounded by more greenery and is much cooler and breezier, even on sunny days.

Although, perhaps it is Singapore's somewhat colder December - January weather that we ought to be thankful for.

Prices are still the same. They start at \$4 a bowl.

I always ask for extra chilli with my noodles so that there is enough to coat every strand. The chilli here is aromatic and mildly spicy.

Last week, I had bak chor mee tai mak or silver needle noodles. These short noodles, which resemble rats' tails, absorb the full flavour of the chilli-vinegar sauce. I slurped up every tail.

**WHERE:** Lai Heng Mushroom Minced Meat Noodle, 01-611 Block 73 Toa Payoh Lorong 4 **MRT:** Toa Payoh **OPEN:** 8am to 4pm, closed on Wednesdays **INFO:** [www.facebook.com/laihengmnm](http://www.facebook.com/laihengmnm)

**WHERE (MRT):** 01-1107, 203 Toa Payoh North (Braddell); 01-140, 136 Bedok North Avenue 3 (Bedok); B1-K10 Causeway Point (Woodlands) **WHEN:** 10am - 9pm (Toa Payoh North), till 9.30pm (Bedok), till 10pm (Causeway Point) **PRICE:** \$8.80 - \$18.80 **INFO:** E-mail [wendy@sunlifepastries.com](mailto:wendy@sunlifepastries.com)

#### Jumbo Ion Reunion Sets

Prices for the Chinese New Year set menus at Jumbo Seafood Ion Orchard range from \$288++ (six courses for four) to \$968++ (eight courses for 10).

The Celebration Set features dishes such as braised codfish soup with conpoy and crab meat and king prawn fried with golden salted egg, while the Reunion Set has dishes like live Boston lobster steamed with minced garlic and glass vermicelli; and whole chicken stuffed with fresh mushrooms in pumpkin broth. Chef recommendations available only at this outlet include Live Alaskan Crab Cooked Three Ways (\$23.80++ for 100g); and Crispy Fried Cod Fish with Nonya Sauce (\$22++).

**WHERE:** 04-09 Ion Orchard, 2 Orchard

Turn **MRT:** Orchard **WHEN:** Mon - Feb 19, 11.30am - 3.30pm, 6 - 10.30pm **PRICE:** Set menus: \$288++ - \$988++; selected a la carte dishes \$16.80++ - \$48++ **TEL:** 6737-3435 **INFO:** [jumboseafood.com.sg](http://jumboseafood.com.sg)

#### Uni Gallery's Yu Sheng Platters

Uni Gallery has come up with two new yusheng platters. The Uni & Caviar Sashimi Yu Sheng (\$128++ to \$198++) features Canadian uni and Polanco caviar, with a dose of ikura and sashimi, such as salmon, kampachi (amberjack) and mekajiki (swordfish).

The Sashimi Yu Sheng Platter (\$38++ to \$68++) includes ikura and sashimi. **WHERE:** B1-1310 The Plaza, 7500A Beach Road **MRT:** Nicoll Highway/Bugis **WHEN:** 11.30am - 2.30pm, 6 - 10pm **PRICE:** \$38++ - \$198++ **TEL:** 9838-8209 **INFO:** [facebook.com/UniGallerySG](http://facebook.com/UniGallerySG)

#### Feast Of Abundance, Royal Reunion At Lime

Have a month-long Feast Of Abundance at Parkroyal on Pickering's Lime. The restaurant is serving a Royal Reunion buffet lunch

and dinner over three days from Chinese New Year's Eve. Dishes for the buffet include roasted duck and pork belly; and pan-fried dumpling with ginger and black vinegar. **WHERE:** Lobby level, Parkroyal on Pickering, 3 Upper Pickering Street **MRT:** Chinatown **WHEN & PRICE:** Noon - 2.30pm, 6.30 - 10.30pm; Today - Feb 19: lunch \$68++ - \$98++ (adult)/\$48++ - \$58++ (child), dinner \$88++ (adult)/\$58++ (child); Feb 4 - 6: lunch \$78++/\$48++, dinner \$98++ - \$128++/\$58++ - \$78++ **TEL:** 6809-8899 **INFO:** E-mail [lime.prsp@parkroyalhotels.com](mailto:lime.prsp@parkroyalhotels.com)

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

# SAW

SINGAPORE ART WEEK

## WHAT'S NEW FOR SAW 2019

A familiar – even iconic – name in the Singapore visual arts calendar, Singapore Art Week (SAW) is back with surprises for everyone, young or old, art enthusiast or casual onlooker. From Jan 19 to 27, art will take over the city as the festival puts up more than 100 visual arts events. Experience art differently this SAW season with:

### Distinctive, diverse and delightful – the seventh edition of Singapore Art Week has something for everyone

Explore questions of domesticity and labour through this community-centric installation that turns everyday domestic objects into works of art. Explore different perspectives on housework through workshops and an exhibition by various artists set in a home environment.

**WHERE** National Design Centre  
111 Middle Road, Singapore 188969

**WHEN** Jan 19 to 27  
Daily: 9am – 9pm

**ADMISSION** Free

**01/ S.E.A. FOCUS: A SPOTLIGHT ON SOUTH-EAST ASIA**  
Experience South-east Asia's thriving art ecology at the inaugural edition of S.E.A. Focus, an initiative by STPI – Creative Workshop and Gallery. This takes the form of a curated boutique art fair with presentations by 25 leading local and international galleries within a special pop-up structure in Gillman Barracks.

**WHERE** Gillman Barracks Pavilion (Carpark B)  
9 Lock Road, Singapore 108937

**WHEN** Jan 24 to 27  
Thu: 3pm – 7pm, Fri: 3pm – 10pm  
Sat, Sun: 11am – 7pm

**ADMISSION** Ticketed

**02/ < > SIM LIM SQUARE ART RESIDENCY**  
Sim Lim Square will become more than just an electronic goods mall over a three-week residency that aims to provide a space for ongoing conversations and investigations between the artists and diverse communities connected by the mall. Enjoy the full residency experience by engaging in conversations with artists, joining panel sessions and going on guided tours.

**WHERE** Sim Lim Square, #06-53/31  
1 Rochor Canal Road, Singapore 188504

**WHEN** Till Jan 27  
Open studio: Noon – 6pm daily

**ADMISSION** Free

**03/ HOME(WORK)**  
Explore questions of domesticity and labour through this community-centric installation that turns everyday domestic objects into works of art. Explore different perspectives on housework through workshops and an exhibition by various artists set in a home environment.

**WHERE** National Design Centre  
111 Middle Road, Singapore 188969

**WHEN** Jan 19 to 27  
Daily: 9am – 9pm

**ADMISSION** Free

**04/ ORTHODOX**  
Embark on personal journeys of faith and tradition through the eyes of 12 emerging young artists. ORTHODOX is an art exhibition curated by Nicole Phua and Liza Markus, featuring installations, live performance art, video art, sculptures and paintings.

**WHERE** Your MOTHER Gallery  
91 Hindoo Road, Singapore 209126/  
Coda Culture, Golden Mile Complex  
5001 Beach Rd, #05-05, Singapore 199588

**WHEN** From Jan 19 to Feb 2/Jan 20 to Feb 3  
Daily: Noon – 8pm/Daily: Noon – 8.30pm

**ADMISSION** Free

**05/ DANCE OF A HUMBLE ATHEIST**  
Immerse in the multidisciplinary installation by Toh Hing Ping which explores ideas relating to death, faith, afterlife, nature, consciousness and time. There will be a clay sculpting and animation workshop, as well as a panel discussion on experimental cinema.

**WHERE** Objectifs  
155 Middle Road, Singapore 188977

**WHEN** Till Feb 17  
Tue to Sat: Noon – 7pm, Sun: Noon – 4pm

**ADMISSION** Free

**06/ MEMORIES OF SINGAPORE RIVER**  
Memories of Singapore River is a Chinese documentary film with English subtitles. Go back to simpler times through paintings and conversations with painters Lim Tze Peng, Tan Choh Tee and Low Puay Hua, as well as other Singaporeans who lived by the river. There will also be outdoor sketch sessions by Singapore Watercolour Society and Urban Sketchers Singapore at Singapore River.

**WHERE** Screenings: Asian Civilisations Museum/Onboard Singapore River Cruise  
Exhibition: The Fullerton Hotel  
Talk: Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre

**WHEN** Jan 19 to Feb 2  
Refer to [artweek.sg](http://artweek.sg) for more details

**ADMISSION** Singapore River Cruise: Ticketed  
Other Programmes: Free

**07/ OF WAX, DYES AND LABOUR**  
See traditional batik in a new light at this exhibition curated by Fajrina Razak which features the works of seven Singapore-based artists – illustrators, a ceramist, a wood-based artist, a photo-based artist, a performance artist and a print maker.

**WHERE** Malay Heritage Centre  
85 Sultan Gate, Singapore 198501

**WHEN** Jan 19 to Feb 9  
Tue to Sun: 10am – 6pm

**ADMISSION** Free for Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents

**08/ OF OTHER PLACES**  
Of Other Places is an interdisciplinary exhibition curated by Dr Wang Ruobing to address the evolution of public places in Singapore and explore the relationship between people and places. Attend dialogue sessions with artists, writers, architects, scientists and a guided tour by Dr Chua Ai Lin.

**WHERE** The Substation  
45 Armenian Street, Singapore 179936

**WHEN** Jan 19 to Feb 3  
Tue to Sun: Noon – 8pm

**ADMISSION** Free

**09/ THE MESHMINDS FOUNDATION AND LASALLE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS PRESENTS: ART X TECH FOR GOOD**  
Art x Tech For Good is an immersive art exhibition focusing on sustainability of people and the planet. Enjoy workshops, talks and performances featuring mashups with VR painting, 360 films and 3D printing.

**WHERE** Roger & Sons  
115 King George's Avenue, Singapore 208561

**WHEN** Jan 19 to 27  
Mon to Thu: 11am – 8pm, Fri to Sun: 11am till late

**ADMISSION** Free

For the full listings of SAW 2019, visit [artweek.sg](http://artweek.sg)  
Singapore Art Week is a joint initiative by National Arts Council, Singapore Tourism Board and Singapore Economic Development Board.

**10/ ART TAKES OVER**  
A large-scale public art installation by various artists, featuring a massive 'ART TAKES OVER' sign and colorful buildings.

**WHERE** Various locations across Singapore

**WHEN** Jan 19 to 27

**ADMISSION** Free



ARTS

BOOKS

Book Launch: When I Was A Kid 5

Malaysian comic-book artist Cheeming Boey will launch volume 5 of the autobiographical graphic novel series When I Was A Kid, which explores the lives of Gor Ko (Boey's dad) and Ah Pui (Boey's mum) as they overcome challenges to come together.

**WHERE:** Kinokuniya Singapore Main Store, 04-20/21 Ngee Ann City (Takashimaya Shopping Centre), 391 Orchard Road **MRT:** Orchard **WHEN:** Jan 26, 2pm **ADMISSION:** Free **TEL:** 6737-5021 **INFO:** kinokuniya.com.sg

Arthur Conan Doyle's The Adventure Of The Final Problem

In The Adventure Of The Final Problem, first published in 1893, detective Sherlock Holmes' supposed last case is recounted by his friend and assistant, Dr John Watson. Dr Gwee Li Sui explores the significance of this story, with its themes for the modern time. The event is part of the National Library Board's How To Fall In Love With Classics (Short Stories) lecture series. **WHERE:** Programme Zone, Central Public Library, Basement National Library Building, 100 Victoria Street **MRT:** City Hall/Bugis **WHEN:** Thu, 7 - 8.30pm **ADMISSION:** Free, register at nlb.gov.sg/golibrary **INFO:** E-mail enquiry@nlb.gov.sg

CONCERTS

SSO Subscription Concert: Lan Shui's Farewell

In his final concert as music director of Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Shui directs Mahler's monumental Resurrection Symphony, a work close to his heart.

**WHERE:** Esplanade Concert Hall, 1 Esplanade Drive **MRT:** Esplanade/ City Hall **WHEN:** Jan 25 & 26, 7.30pm **ADMISSION:** \$15 - \$88 (30 per cent discount for students, full-time national servicemen, seniors & persons with disabilities) **INFO:** www.esplanade.com

Cheng San Chinese Orchestra: Greatest Chinese Classics

The Cheng San Chinese Orchestra, led by Wilson Neo and featuring guest singer He Mi Ya, will perform Chinese classics from the 1980s and 1990s, such as Spring Suite by Gu Guan Ren, Dream Of The Red Chamber, Yellow River and Liu Wenjin's Unforgettable Water Sprinkling Festival.

**WHERE:** Esplanade Concert Hall, 1 Esplanade Drive **MRT:** Esplanade/ City Hall **WHEN:** Jan 27, 5pm **ADMISSION:** \$15; \$8 concession for students, full-time national servicemen & seniors **INFO:** www.esplanade.com

VCH Organ Series: Thomas Trotter - Arrival, 1819

Be astounded by British virtuoso organist, Thomas Trotter, in an evening recital of organ greats. Myriad organ colours from Bach to Ginastera give way to a celebration of familiar and famous British tunes, including Holst's Jupiter and Elgar's Land Of Hope And Glory. **WHERE:** Victoria Concert Hall, 9 Empress Place **MRT:** Raffles Place **WHEN:** Feb 15, 7.30pm **ADMISSION:** \$20 **TEL:** 6348-5555 **INFO:** www.sistic.com.sg

DANCE

Q&A (The 36 Questions)

Can a series of 36 questions make you fall in love with a stranger? Would you like to be famous? When did you last sing to yourself? Or to someone else? What is your most terrible memory? Psychologist Arthur Aron has put together 36 questions that pairs of strangers may ask each other. His belief is that by placing strangers in positions of vulnerability and openness, it fosters openness to another person, leading to them falling in love. **WHERE:** Esplanade Theatre Studio, 1 Esplanade Drive **MRT:** Esplanade/ City Hall **WHEN:** Jan 25 & 26, 8pm **ADMISSION:** \$27 (\$19 for students, national servicemen & seniors) **INFO:** www.esplanade.com

Yajnaseni - The Eternal Flame

Does dharma take priority over emotions? This is a question Draupadi, heroine of the Mahabharatam, silently faced. Yajnaseni gives voice to this private struggle, exploring the shades of grey between what is right and what feels wrong and between one's duty and feelings. **WHERE:** Esplanade Theatre Studio, 1 Esplanade Drive **MRT:** Esplanade/ City Hall **WHEN:** Feb 1 & 2, 8pm **ADMISSION:** \$35 (\$25 for students & seniors) **INFO:** www.esplanade.com

Dance Appreciation Series: Introduction To Don Quixote

Singapore Dance Theatre's classic ballet Don Quixote has been condensed into an hour-long special for young audiences. Told through

narration and dance excerpts, the production tells a story of love, betrayal and eternal devotion.

**WHERE:** Esplanade Concert Hall, 1 Esplanade Drive **MRT:** Esplanade/ City Hall **WHEN:** Feb 9, 4pm **ADMISSION:** \$14 **INFO:** www.esplanade.com

EXHIBITIONS (GALLERIES)

Monumenta: In Lightness

Gajah Gallery presents a group exhibition featuring paintings, sculptures and installations of a monumental scale, created by 14 South-east Asian artists who explore the relationship among art, light and life.

**WHERE:** Gajah Gallery Singapore, 03-04 Tanjong Pagar Distripark, 39 Keppel Road **MRT:** Tanjong Pagar **WHEN:** Wed - Feb 10, 11am - 7pm (Mon - Fri), noon - 6pm (Sat, Sun & public holidays) **ADMISSION:** Free **TEL:** 6737-4202 **INFO:** gajahgallery.com

Mind(less) Wilderness

Singapore-based artist Nandita Mukand's solo exhibition mixes observations of how plants grow in the forest with the workings of the urban mind. Drawing on diverse resources such as neuroplasticity, quantum physics, contemporary Buddhist texts and ancient Vedic literature, she presents paintings and sculptures using synthetic and organic materials.

**WHERE:** Miaja Gallery, Level 2 APS Building, 9 Muthuraman Chetty Road **MRT:** Fort Canning **WHEN:** Till March 2, 10am - 7pm (Mon - Fri), Sat & Sun by appointment only **ADMISSION:** Free **TEL:** 6737-8865 **INFO:** E-mail info@miajagallery.com or go to miajagallery.com

Mapletree Business City Guided Art Tour

During Singapore Art Week, Mapletree Investment will host four guided art tours at Mapletree Business City as part of the Mapletree-NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore Public Art Education Programme. There are also artist talks, workshops and conferences.

**WHERE:** Meet at Alexandra Retail Centre (main entrance, taxi stand), 460 Alexandra Road **MRT:** Labrador Park **WHEN:** Wed & Thu, noon - 12.45pm **ADMISSION:** Free **INFO:** www.MapletreeArts.sg

Solo Exhibition By Lindy Lee

Celebrated Australian artist Lindy Lee's first solo exhibition in Singapore is part of Gillman Barracks' Art After Dark celebrations and held in conjunction with Singapore Art Week. Her practice explores her Chinese ancestry through Taoism and Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism - philosophies that see humanity and nature as inextricably linked.

**WHERE:** Sullivan+Strumpf, 01-06 Gillman Barracks, 5 Lock Road **MRT:** Labrador Park **WHEN:** Fri -

Feb 24, 11am - 7pm (Tue - Sat), 11am - 6pm (Sun) **ADMISSION:** Free

THEATRE

Hello, Dali!

Delta Force Improv presents the debut performance of this interactive, fully immersive theatre experience. Scenes will be inspired by audience suggestions as well as Spanish artist Salvadore Dali's most famous works.

**WHERE:** The Merry Lion, 8B Circular Road (Level 3) **MRT:** Clarke Quay/ Raffles Place **WHEN:** Wed, 7.30pm **ADMISSION:** \$15, tickets & more information at hellodalipeatix.com

Homesick

This Alfian Sa'at play, presented by King Edward VII Hall Play 18/19, is set in 2003 Singapore, when the Sars outbreak forcefully brought together the Koh family, who have otherwise been detached for years. It tackles the issue of immigration, ultimately leaving the audience to ponder the true meaning of belonging, in modern-day Singapore.

**WHERE:** NUS University Cultural Centre Theatre, 50 Kent Ridge Crescent **MRT:** Kent Ridge **WHEN:** Fri, 7pm; Jan 26, 1.30 & 7pm **ADMISSION:** \$20 a ticket (\$85 for five tickets) **TEL:** 8139-6748 (Natalie)/9370-3816 (Kezia)/8138-7092 (Megan) **INFO:** facebook.com/KEhallplay

Arts Picks

Melissa Sim Assistant Life Editor recommends



S.E.A. FOCUS

South-east Asian modern and contemporary art will take centre stage at this boutique art fair's inaugural edition, which is part of Singapore Art Week.

Twenty six galleries are taking part, with more than 186 artworks on display.

Not to be missed are the talks on a

wide range of topics, including the opportunities and challenges of art-making in Singapore and the development and future of the South-east Asian art market.

Organised by STPI - Creative Workshop & Gallery, with United Overseas Bank (UOB) as the lead partner and sponsor, the exhibition will also have a UOB Art Space to

showcase artworks by winners of the UOB Painting of the Year competition, such as Angst (2018, above) by Indonesian artist Suvi Wahyudianto.

Executive director of STPI - Creative Workshop & Gallery Emi Eu says the programmes underscore the "commitment to provide varied entry points to appreciate art in a

relaxed ambience".

**WHERE:** Gillman Barracks **MRT:** Labrador Park **WHEN:** Thursday to Jan 27, opening hours vary **ADMISSION:** Four-day pass: \$20; day pass: \$15; day pass (senior citizens over age 60 and national servicemen): \$10; student pass: free, identity checks will be carried out on site **INFO:** seafocus.sg/

PRINT ROOM: COLLECT

Established and emerging Singapore photographers are featured in this exhibition, which looks at the process of artists who seek, source and gather materials and data for their artworks.

Hanging Heavy On My Eyes by Ang Song Nian, 35, documents the haze situation in Singapore; With Nature And A Camera by Robert Zhao Renhui, 35, involves the observation of unnatural animal behaviour in an urban environment; and Ways To Tie Trees (right) by Woong Soak Teng, 25, explores how nature has been subjected to manipulation.

This is the inaugural edition of a quarterly showcase organised by Deck, a non-profit art organisation dedicated to photography.

The series hopes to nurture the appreciation of photography and advocate for the medium's place in contemporary art collections.

Artist Ang says that "in comparison with other mediums, in the context of contemporary art collections, photography is just a very young medium".

However, he adds that today, photography is very much present in everyday lives and "there are many ways to use it and, most importantly, many ways to look at it, like art".

**WHERE:** Deck, 120A Prinsep Street



**MRT:** Rochor **WHEN:** Till March 30, gallery hours: noon to 7pm (Tuesdays to Saturdays), noon to 5pm (Sundays) **ADMISSION:** Free **INFO:** deck.sg

PHOTOS: UOB, VERY SPECIAL ARTS SINGAPORE, WOONG SOAK TENG/ DECK



MY JOURNEY - FEEL THE HOPE, EMBRACE THE SHINE

Cultural Medallion recipient Chng Seok Tin showcases paintings, sculptures, prints and literature, which have never been exhibited before.

She taught at Lasalle College of the Arts before losing

her eyesight, but that did not stop her from creating art. Currently recovering from lung cancer, she is an inspiration to many artists here.

In conjunction with this exhibition, there will be two print-making workshops conducted by Chng. Participants will be blindfolded and encouraged to engage their senses during the workshop's activities.

The exhibition is presented by Very Special Arts Singapore, a charity which provides access for people with disabilities through the arts.

EXHIBITION

**WHERE:** Galleries 1 and 2 and Blue Room, The Arts House, 1 Old Parliament Lane **MRT:** City Hall/ Raffles Place **WHEN:** Till Jan 21, 10am to 10pm **ADMISSION:** Free **INFO:** tinyurl.com/yc2vqx02

WORKSHOPS

**WHERE:** Gallery 1, The Arts House **MRT:** City Hall/ Raffles Place **WHEN:** Tomorrow, 11am to 12.30pm (session 1), 2 to 3.30pm (session 2) **ADMISSION:** \$40 **INFO:** www.vsa.org.sg/product-category/concert-tickets

Bookmark This! A library on fire, haunting by a woman in black



ST PHOTO: ERNEST LUIS

Join Life reporters Toh Wen Li and Olivia Ho (both left) in this monthly podcast by The Straits Times, in which they talk about books in the headlines and recommend new reads.

In this episode, they chat about The Library Book by Susan Orlean, an investigation into the 1986 Los Angeles Public Library fire and a love letter to libraries everywhere; and Melmoth by Sarah Perry, a neo-Gothic novel in which the guilty are haunted through history by a woman in black.

**Produced by:** Olivia Ho, Toh Wen Li and Ernest Luis **Feedback to:** podcast@sph.com.sg **Download ST & BT podcasts for offline listening:** str.sg/stbtpodcasts **On website:** str.sg/stpodcasts **On Spotify:** str.sg/oeGg **On iTunes:** str.sg/oeXN **On Google podcasts:** str.sg/oeLG



Film & TV Picks

John Iui Film Correspondent recommends



THE OLD MAN AND THE GUN (PG13)

94 minutes / ★★★★★

Forrest Tucker (Robert Redford, above) is in his 70s, but is in no hurry to slow down his bank-robbing career. Police detective John Hunt (Casey Affleck) is intrigued by Tucker's confidence and takes a personal stake in the case. Tucker meets Jewel (Sissy Spacek, above) and woos her without revealing his double life.

This is the film that Redford has picked to close his career, and it is a fitting one. Tucker is a senior whose bank robbing job requires him to pretend to be someone else to win the trust of his target.

And, very much like an actor, Tucker's skill in maintaining a front is crucial to the success of the enterprise.

It is easy to think of this picture as a latter-day postscript to Redford's 1969 classic, Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid.



CAPERNAUM (NC16)

123 minutes

This Lebanese drama picked up the Jury Prize at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival. After its premiere there, it reportedly won a 15-minute standing ovation.

The story is seen from the point of view of a boy, Zain (Zain Al Rafeea, above) – a Syrian refugee in Lebanon and a child who has taken his

parents to court to sue them for giving him life. He has been born into unimaginable hardship and wants his parents punished.

Lebanese film-maker Nadine Labaki sees the work as giving voice to a generation born into war and poverty.

**WHERE:** GV Paya Lebar  
**WHEN:** Jan 25 and 26, 7pm  
**ADMISSION:** \$13.50  
**INFO:** www.anticipatepictures.com

PHOTOS: SHAW ORGANISATION, ANTICIPATE PICTURES, HBO ASIA



TRUE DETECTIVE, SEASON 3

Now showing on HBO, HBO Go and HBO On Demand/★★★★★

After the quality slump of Season 2, this drama about moody cops haunted by their worst cases seems to have picked itself up, if the first two episodes are anything to go by.

Wayne Hayes (Mahershala Ali, above) is a black detective working in

a nearly all-white Ozark town, and dealing with the mistrust that follows. In a story spanning decades, Hayes has to discover truths about a case of child abduction and murder before everything is lost to his deepening dementia.

Ali's powerful performance is backed up by those of Carmen Ejogo (above), who plays his wife Amelia, and Stephen Dorff, who is his partner Roland.

FILMS

Early Spring (1956, PG)

Director Yasujiro Ozu's exceptional follow-up to his critically acclaimed Tokyo Story is set in the quintessentially humdrum world of salarymen. A discontented young white-collar worker – bored with his wife and his job – has a brief affair with the office flirt and imperils his marriage.

**WHERE:** The Projector, Level 5 Golden Mile Tower, 6001 Beach Road  
**MRT:** Nicoll Highway **WHEN:** Jan 27 & Feb 9, 4.30pm (Green Room)  
**ADMISSION:** \$13.50 (standard), \$11.50 (concession) **INFO:** theprojector.sg

Life Is Beautiful (1997, PG)

Life Is Beautiful (in Italian with English subtitles) is about an open-minded Jewish Italian man and his son who become prisoners in camps during the Holocaust. He uses a mix of will, humour and imagination to protect his son from the dangers around their camp. Presented by the embassies of Italy and Israel in commemoration of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, this film won Oscars for Best Actor, Best Original Dramatic Score and Best Foreign Language Film.

**WHERE:** The Projector, Level 5 Golden Mile Tower, 6001 Beach Road  
**MRT:** Nicoll Highway **WHEN:** Jan 27, 5.30pm & Feb 9, 8.30pm (Redrum)  
**ADMISSION:** \$13.50 (standard), \$11.50 (concession) **INFO:** theprojector.sg

Schindler's List (1993, M18)

This is the digitally remastered version to commemorate the 25th anniversary release of Steven Spielberg's masterpiece, which won seven Academy Awards, including best picture and best director. The true story follows the enigmatic Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), who saved the lives of more than 1,100 Jews during the Holocaust.

**WHERE:** The Projector, Level 5 Golden Mile Tower, 6001 Beach Road

**MRT:** Nicoll Highway **WHEN:** Feb 3, 7.20pm; Feb 16, 1.30pm (Green Room)  
**ADMISSION:** \$13.50 (standard), \$11.50 (concession) **INFO:** theprojector.sg

CONTEST

Snap, Post & Win With Cold Stone Creamery

To take part in ice-cream chain Cold Stone Creamery's contest, snap a picture at Cold Stone Creamery outlets at VivoCity, Waterway Point or Orchard Central, post it on Instagram with the hashtag

#ColdStoneCharacterCakes, and tag @ColdStoneCreamerySG and friends whom you want to share the prizes with. The photo with the most likes each week will be selected to win a pair of in-season passes to DreamWorks Animation's upcoming feature film, How To Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World. All submissions will be entered into the final round and the photo with the most likes will win the grand prize – one year of free ice cream.

**WHERE (MRT):** Cold Stone Creamery outlets at VivoCity (HarbourFront), Waterway Point (Punggol) and Orchard Central (Somerset)  
**WHEN:** Closing date: Feb 28  
**ADMISSION:** Free  
**INFO:** coldstonecreamery.com.sg

KIDS

Developing Social And Emotional Intelligence In Children

In this workshop, participants learn how to effectively develop their children's social and emotional intelligence in five steps. How well children do at school and in life is affected by factors such as how confident they feel about themselves, how effectively they are able to manage their behaviour, how well they can concentrate and organise themselves and how effectively they can solve problems.

**WHERE:** Singapore Shopping Centre, 190 Clemenceau Avenue **MRT:** Dhoby Ghaut **WHEN:** Tomorrow, 10am - 1pm  
**ADMISSION:** \$37.87 (original price \$128), register at eventbrite.sg

Story-Telling Session: Tiger Tales

Listen to Asian folktales about tigers as told by young storytellers. For instance, did you know that tigers used to be a smooth golden colour? According to Vietnamese folklore, the mighty tiger was tricked into getting his stripes. Tigers are the fiercest animal in the forest, except for one particular tiger from Korea who was afraid of the persimmon.

**WHERE:** The Artground at Goodman Arts Centre, 90 Goodman Road  
**MRT:** Mountbatten **WHEN:** Jan 27, 11.30am - 12.15pm **ADMISSION:** \$10 for each parent-child pair  
**INFO:** storytellingcentrelimited.com

TOURS

Chinatown CNY Festive Market Walk

Led by a Chinatown resident and guide, this walk offers a fun combination of history, sightseeing, street art, stories and customs of Chinese New Year. There will also be tastings of festive goodies.

**WHERE/MRT:** Meet at Chinatown Market station **WHEN:** Tue, Jan 25, 26, 29, & 30, Feb 1 & 2 (6 - 8pm)  
**ADMISSION:** \$48 a person  
**TEL:** 8749-4007  
**INFO:** everydaytourcompany.com

Walking Tour: There Was A Road Here

The route will straddle neighbourhoods of historical significance that lie between Serangoon Road and Beach Road and attempts to retrace fragmented urban parcels and reclaim lost narratives. With the aid of old and new street maps, participants will learn how "mapping" is a cultural activity that reveals or conceals complexity.

**WHERE:** Rochor (meeting point will be provided upon confirmation)  
**MRT:** Rochor/Jalan Besar  
**WHEN:** Feb 23 & March 2, 9am - noon  
**ADMISSION:** \$15, tickets and info at therewasaroadhere.peatix.com

OTHERS

An Enchanted Garden Wedding Showcase

Couples can view one-of-a-kind wedding designs, explore food and beverage offerings by The Halia restaurant and enjoy exclusive offers by bridal vendors.

**WHERE:** The Villa, 1 Cluny Road, Ginger Garden, Singapore Botanic Gardens  
**MRT:** Botanic Gardens  
**WHEN/ADMISSION:** Sun, 11am - 3pm (\$38 net a couple), 4 - 6pm (\$28 net a couple) **TEL:** 6484-0711 **INFO:** Go to bit.ly/villawedshow19 or garden-events-sg.com

CNY Lion Dance Competition

In its 12th year, this annual event will see top lion dance troupes from Singapore and the Asia-Pacific region vying for the grand prize.

**WHERE:** Kreta Ayer Square, 21 Banda Street **MRT:** Outram Park/Chinatown  
**WHEN:** Jan 26, 6.30 - 10.30pm  
**ADMISSION:** \$10, tickets from Kreta Ayer Community Club, 28 Kreta Ayer Road; and Chinatown Visitor Centre, 2 Banda Street, Kreta Ayer Square  
**TEL:** 6222-3597 (Kreta Ayer Community Centre), 6534-894 (Chinatown Visitor Centre)

LAST CALL

Seniors Day Out: Kopi, Teh & Contemporary Art

Led by trained multilingual students, visitors will learn about the artworks in the Singapore Art Museum President's Young Talents exhibition. The session will end with a fun hands-on workshop and light refreshments.

**WHERE:** Gallery & Workshop Spaces, SAM at 8Q, 8 Queen Street **MRT:** Bras Basah **WHEN:** Tomorrow, 3 - 5.30pm  
**ADMISSION:** Free **INFO:** E-mail education@singaporeartmuseum.sg

Outdoor Movie Screening: The Greatest Showman (2017, PG)

Bring a mat and picnic basket and enjoy this movie starring Hugh Jackman, Michelle Williams and Zac Efron. The film celebrates the birth of show business and tells of a visionary who rose from nothing to create a spectacle that became a worldwide sensation.

**WHERE:** SAM at 8Q Plaza, Singapore Art Museum, 8 Queen Street  
**MRT:** Bras Basah **WHEN:** Tomorrow, 8pm **ADMISSION:** Free  
**INFO:** singaporeartmuseum.sg

Open Call For Strings For Kindness

Strings for Kindness, which comprises young string players who aim to inspire graciousness through kind acts and music playing, is calling for young violinists – primary school pupils or other violinists – to audition for a chance to join the ensemble.

**WHERE:** Multi Purpose Room, 8@Mt Sophia **MRT:** Dhoby Ghaut  
**WHEN:** Tomorrow, 5.30pm  
**ADMISSION:** Free  
**INFO:** facebook.com/StringsForKindness

• The listings on these Happenings pages are free. Write to Life Happenings, Life, The Straits Times, 1000 Toa Payoh North, Singapore 318994 or e-mail stlife@sph.com.sg at least two weeks ahead. Include the name of the event, organiser, venue, date and time, ticket prices and nearest MRT station, as well as your name, address and contact number. We reserve the right to edit or reject items. Go to www.straitstimes.com (click on Lifestyle) for more listings.



# Pushing up profits in the #MeToo era

**In seeking to improve the bottom line, lingerie brands have to tread a fine line between staying interesting and objectifying women**

PARIS • With G-strings and push-up bras losing their allure as ultra sexiness gives way to comfort and the whole idea of seduction being questioned, lingerie designers are grappling with how to be interesting without objectifying women.

Aubade, one of France's leading lingerie brands, does not shy away from sex in its advertising.

But it found itself at the centre of controversy last month over a huge poster of a pair of perfectly rounded buttocks wearing embroidered panties.

Hung from the facade of one of Paris' biggest department stores, it sparked a furious response from the city's deputy equality chief, who called for it to be taken down.

Communist councillor Helene Bidard accused the brand of objectifying a "faceless" woman and demanded "the immediate withdrawal of this sexist campaign".

Others, however, countered that women's rights tended to be the least respected in countries where such billboards were banned.

"We were not expecting the fuss," said Aubade boss Martina Brown.

The brand's Lessons In Seduction advertisement campaign sparked similar horror 25 years ago, she said, when it urged women to "keep it spicy" and "let the situation work to your advantage".

"It shocked people, but that did not stop women buying the lingerie nor the brand evolving," said the Germany-born managing director.

"Women love to see fine embroidery and lace. It talks to them and that is why we have been zooming in on the underwear.

"We have to cut off the models' heads in the photos, otherwise we can't show the detailing," she insisted.

Nor did she feel that impossible body standards were being set for women.

"Twenty years ago, some brands used ordinary women rather than models for their ads. We prefer to let people dream," Ms Brown added.

Aubade will be showing alongside 15 other big French brands at a huge Lingerie Rocks show this weekend during Paris fashion week.

The line-up also includes Henriette H, a young label at the other end of the spectrum which works mostly on Instagram.

Its creator, Ms Sarah Stagliano, opened her boutique on a street in central Paris once known for its bordellos.

Ms Stagliano, 36, has tried to capture something of that risque air by putting her changing rooms in the window. It is up to the customers whether they draw the curtain or not.

Nor is her label averse to some rather provocative embroidery, with an explicit come-on delicately sewn into the arm of a chemise.

"I can see how all this could be taken badly," she said. "But a woman should be at liberty to put herself in the window if she wants to. It's about reappropriation."

The Simone Perele brand takes a far more restrained view.

For last year, it has been showing its creations in still life draped on the end of a sofa or glimpsed on a sportswoman or writer.

"There is another way of doing it," said Ms Stephanie Perele, the granddaughter of the label's founder, who says women have had enough of Photoshopped images.



Ms Anne-Marie Afflard, Simone Perele's head of technical development, during a photo session at the Simone Perele headquarters in Clichy outside Paris last month. The brand has been showing its creations in still life.

PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Even after #MeToo, we are stuck with a lot of stereotypes. Lots of things are changing, but there is still a way to go.**



MR RENAUD CAMBUZAT, a fashion photographer and artistic director of the Chantelle group

Mr Renaud Cambuzat, a fashion photographer and artistic director of the Chantelle group, said there were still nowhere near enough underwear choices for modern women, who are "complex, multifaceted and ever-changing".

At one extreme, you have the ailing American giant Victoria's Secret, he said, "which seems totally oblivious to #MeToo" and whose difficulties show that "we could be seeing the end of an era".

On the other, "there is the opposite extreme where you can no longer see the form of the body and we are in a kind of cartoonish plus-sized" universe.

"Even after #MeToo, we are stuck with a lot of stereotypes. Lots of things are changing, but there is still a way to go," Mr Cambuzat argued. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

## One-woman show is a run for one's money

### REVIEW / THEATRE

JOGGING: THEATRE IN PROGRESS

M1 Singapore Fringe Festival  
Esplanade Theatre Studio/Wednesday

Olivia Ho

What Hanane Hajj Ali talks about when she talks about running ranges from the transcendental to the disturbing.

She talks about God. She talks about sex – dream sex, bad sex, bad dream sex. She talks about what it must be like to kill your children.

Grim stuff, to be sure. And yet, this one-woman show by Hanane, a Lebanese actress in her 50s, is also slyly funny.

Directed by Eric Deniaud and performed chiefly in Arabic, it follows Hanane as she jogs around Beirut daily to stave off osteoporosis, obesity and depression.

Along the way, it wanders through the landscape of womanhood in Lebanon, a country where female citizens cannot pass their nationality on to their children.

Clad in black running gear, Hanane makes a spectacle of her exercise – huffing and puffing, contorting herself into comical warm-up poses – which belies the fact that she is dexterous.

At one point, she delivers her lines while moving heels over head into a yoga pose with nary a hitch in breath.

She often calls upon the audience, asking them to read out introductions between scenes, teasing male



Lebanese actress Hanane Hajj Ali covers issues ranging from the transcendental to the disturbing in Jogging: Theatre In Progress.

PHOTO: MARWAN TAHTAH

audience members and, at one point, handing out fruit salad to the front row.

An obsession with the figure of Medea from Greek myth runs throughout the piece.

Medea, as satirically recounted by Hanane, was a princess and sorceress who betrayed her father and killed her brother to gain the love of the hero Jason, only for him to later abandon her. In revenge, she killed their two children.

Hanane struggles to understand how a mother could do such a deed, yet she reveals that she has dreamt

of smothering her seven-year-old son when he had cancer, to spare him more suffering.

She slips adroitly into the stories of two modern-day Medeas: Yvonne, who poisons her three daughters and herself with fruit salad (the same kind Hanane serves to the audience); and Zahra, a militant's wife who responds to her husband's adultery by asking God to make her sons martyrs.

Shifting between the scabrous and the sepulchral, Hanane proves herself to be an actress at the top of her game.

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## Feast on food, art and music



Life writers (from left) Boon Chan, Melissa Sim and Rebecca Lynne Tan talk about Chinese New Year cookies, among other topics. ST PHOTO: OLIVIA HO

Tune in to ST podcast Life Picks, in which Life reporters highlight the best films, concerts, restaurants and arts events.

This week, Life reporters Boon Chan, Melissa Sim and Rebecca Lynne Tan chat about their favourite Chinese New Year cookies, Singapore Art Week's S.E.A Focus art fair and singer Yoyo Sham, who will be singing at the Esplanade on Feb 23, as part of the Huayi Chinese Festival of Arts.

SCAN TO LISTEN:  
bit.ly/2DgXArP





Comics

BABY BLUES



GARFIELD



Free to air

CHANNEL 5

**AM**  
6.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 15 (HD) (PG) (V)  
7.00 First Look Asia (Simulcast From CNA) (CA)  
9.00 The Dr Oz Show 10 (HD) (IE)  
10.00 Films & Stars (PG) (V)  
10.30 Everyday Gourmet 3 (HD) (IE)  
11.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16 (HD) (PG) (V)  
**PM**  
12.00 Martha Bakes 6 (HD) (IE)  
12.30 Secret Meat Business (IE)  
1.00 Wheel Of Fortune 36 (HD) (CC) (V)  
1.30 Kin (PG) (CC) (D)  
2.00 Phua Chu Kang Pte Ltd 4 (SC)  
2.30 Talking Point 2018 (HD) (CA)  
3.00 The Dr Oz Show 10 (HD) (PG) (IE)  
3.50 Make You Laugh Out Loud 3 (PG) (V)  
4.30 America's Got Talent 12 (HD) (PG) (V)  
5.30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16 (HD) (PG) (V)  
6.30 X-Men: The Last Stand (PG) (CC) (M)  
8.30 Kin (PG) (CC) (D)  
9.00 News 5 (HD)  
9.30 On the Red Dot – Old Enough! (CA)  
10.00 XXX (PG) (CC) (M)  
**AM**  
12.30 Kin (PG) (CC) (D)  
1.00 Code Of Law 4 (PG13) (D)  
2.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16 (V)  
2.50 This Is Us (HD) (PG13) (D)  
3.40 Everyday Gourmet 3 (HD) (IE)  
4.10 Martha Bakes 6 (IE)  
4.40 Secret Meat Business (IE)  
5.10 The Dr Oz Show 10 (PG) (IE)

CHANNEL 8

**AM**  
6.00 X Warrior – International PK Matches (V)  
7.30 Hello Singapore Highlights (HD) (CA)  
8.00 Heart To Heart (PG) (CC) (D)  
9.00 Morning Express (HD) (News)  
9.30 Jalan Jalan (PG) (CC) (D)  
10.00 Focus (CC) (CA)  
10.30 The Mermaid (Chinese Opera)  
11.30 How Are You? (PG) (CC) (D)  
**PM**  
12.30 JML Home Shopping (Infomercial)

1.00 News 8 At One (HD)  
1.30 118 (PG) (CC) (D)  
2.00 Cookie Master (SC)  
2.30 Your Hand In Mine (HD) (CC) (D)  
3.30 Golden Age Talentime (HD) (CC) (V)  
4.30 Taste Of Life (PG) (D)  
5.30 118 Reunion (PG) (CC) (D)  
6.30 Hello Singapore (HD) (News)  
7.30 Jalan Jalan (PG) (CC) (D)  
8.00 Body SOS 7 (CC) (V)  
8.30 Frontline (CA)  
9.00 Heart To Heart (PG) (CC) (D)  
10.00 News Tonight (HD)  
10.30 Food And Beverage Investigators 8 (IE)  
11.00 Princess Agents (PG) (CC) (D)  
**AM**  
12.00 The Princess Weiyong (PG) (D)  
1.00 Lady Investigators (D)  
2.00 A Time To Dance (D)  
4.00 A Place Called Home (PG) (D)

CHANNEL U

**PM**  
3.00 Heroes Of Remix (V)  
4.30 King Of The Kitchens (IE)  
5.00 Cheongdamdong Scandal (PG) (CC) (D)  
6.00 The Menu (PG) (CC) (D)  
7.00 You Are The Only One (PG) (CC) (D) (Finale)  
9.00 Hello Taiwan (IE)  
10.00 Brother's Keeper 2 (PG13) (CC) (D)  
11.00 News Tonight  
11.30 Hello Taiwan (IE)  
**AM**  
12.30 You Are The Only One (PG) (CC) (D) (Finale)  
2.30 Close

CNA

**AM**  
06.00 Singapore Tonight  
07.00 First Look Asia  
09.00 Asia Business First  
10.02 Champions For Change  
11.00 News Now  
**PM**  
01.02 Insight  
02.00 News Now  
04.02 Champions For Change  
05.00 News Now  
07.02 Edible Wild (CC)

07.30 Made In Singapore (CC)  
08.00 Primetime Asia  
09.02 Conversation With (CC)  
09.30 Super Octogenarians (CC)  
10.00 Singapore Tonight  
11.02 Insight  
**AM**  
12.00 News Now  
12.30 Asia Business First Weekend  
1.02 Conversation With  
1.30 Super Octogenarians  
2.00 News Now  
2.30 Correspondents' Diary  
3.02 Champions For Change  
4.00 News Now  
4.30 Correspondents' Diary  
5.02 Conversation With  
5.30 Super Octogenarians  
Programmes may be pre-empted by breaking news

VASANTHAM

**PM**  
3.00 Super Samayal 4 (IE)  
3.30 Azhagiya Snehithi 2 (IE)  
4.00 Sundaram Kudumbathinar (HD) (D)  
4.30 Enna Nadakuthu 6 (HD) (V)  
5.30 Motu Patlu (S)  
6.00 Suryaputhri 2 (Malayalam) (D)  
7.00 Oru Oorilae (CC) (S)  
7.30 Janani D/O Madhavan (CC) (S)  
8.00 Uyire (PG) (CC) (D)  
8.30 Tamil Seithi (News)  
9.00 Indian Beat 9 (HD) (CC) (IE)  
9.30 Tamil Talks: Thullatha Manamum Thullum (PG) (CC) (M)  
**AM**  
12.30 Tamil Seithi (News) (R)  
1.00 Close

OKTO

**AM**  
9.00 Twirlywoos (P)  
9.30 Teddies (P)  
10.00 Doki (HD) (P)  
10.30 Sesame Street (HD) (P)  
11.00 Dora The Explorer (HD) (P)  
11.30 Andy's Prehistoric Adventures (P)  
**PM**  
12.00 Bugsville (P)  
12.30 Teddies (HD) (IE)  
1.00 Coconut The Little Dragon (P)  
1.30 Twirlywoos (P)  
2.00 Doki (HD) (P)

2.30 Sesame Street (HD) (P)  
3.00 Dora The Explorer (HD) (P)  
3.30 Andy's Prehistoric Adventures (P)  
4.00 Odd Squad (HD) (S)  
4.30 Captain Flinn And The Pirate Dinosaurs (S)  
5.00 Littlest Pet Shop (S)  
5.30 Marcus Level (HD) (S)  
6.00 The Lion Guard (S)  
6.30 The Diary Of Amos Lee (S)  
7.00 My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic (HD) (CC) (S)  
7.30 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (HD) (CC) (S)  
8.00 Star Wars Rebels (HD) (CC) (S)  
8.30 Inazuma Eleven (HD) (CC) (S)  
9.00 Tryfactor (CC) (Sports)  
9.30 ONE Championship 2018/19 – ONE Warrior Series 2 (HD) (Sports)  
10.00 ONE Championship 2018/19: Quest For Gold (Yangon) (PG13) (Sports)  
**AM**  
1.10 ONE Championship Weekly (HD) (PG13) (Sports)  
1.40 Close

SURIA

**PM**  
4.00 Seindah Takdir Cinta (PG) (D)  
5.00 Ti Amo, Sweetheart 100 Hari! (PG) (CC) (D)  
6.00 Kem Tahan (IE)  
6.30 Makan Xtrim (HD) (PG) (IE)  
7.00 Teratai Kemboja (HD) (PG) (CC) (D)  
8.00 Berita (HD) (News)  
8.30 Mamaku Sayang (CC) (S)  
9.00 Luar Biasa (PG) (CC) (M)  
11.00 Juang Seorang Usahawan (CC) (IE)  
11.30 Berita (HD) (News)  
**AM**  
12.00 Close

C: Children; CA: Current Affairs; CC: Closed Captions; Cul: Culture; D: Drama; IE: Info-Ed; M: Movies; P: Preschool; PG: Parental Guidance; R: Repeat; S: Schoolkids; SC: Sitcom; V: Variety

Programme schedules correct at time of printing. Telecast details from Mediacorp, StarHub and Singtel TV. For pay TV updates, go to [www.starhub.com/tv](http://www.starhub.com/tv) or [www.singtelv.com.sg](http://www.singtelv.com.sg)

StarHub TV

HISTORY (CHANNEL 401)

**AM**  
9.30 Forged In Fire 5  
10.25 History Drama: Knightfall  
11.20 The Warfighters  
**PM**  
12.15 Football's Greatest Moments  
1.10 History Drama: Vikings 5  
2.05 History Drama: Knightfall  
3.00 Storage Wars: Texas 6  
3.30 The Pickers 11  
4.25 History Drama: Vikings 5  
5.20 Forged In Fire 5  
6.15 The Pickers 11/7.10 Pawn Stars 19  
8.05 Storage Wars: Texas 6  
8.30 Storage Wars 10  
9.00 Swamp Mysteries With Troy Landry  
9.55 Alone 4/10.50 Genius  
11.45 Football's Greatest Moments

LIFETIME (CHANNEL 514)

**AM**  
9.00 Scraps  
10.00 Project Runway: Fashion Startup  
11.00 Zoo 3  
**PM**  
12.00 Dance Moms 6  
1.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16  
2.00 The Murder Pact  
3.35 Born This Way 2  
4.30 Little Women LA: Terra's Little Family  
5.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16  
6.00 Man Vs Child: Chef Showdown  
7.00 Making A Model With Yolanda Hadid  
8.00 The Rap Game 3  
9.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16  
10.00 Little Girl's Secret  
11.35 Man Vs Child: Chef Showdown  
**AM**  
12.30 The Rap Game 3

HBO (CHANNEL 601)

**AM**  
9.30 Murder By Numbers  
11.25 Meet The Fockers (NC16)  
**PM**  
1.20 Darkest Hour/3.25 Forces Of Nature  
5.10 Star Trek (2009)  
7.15 The Jungle Book/9.00 Thor  
10.55 Street Kings (NC16)  
**AM**  
12.40 Your Highness (M18)

CINEMAX (CHANNEL 611)

**AM**  
8.25 The River/10.25 The Postman  
**PM**  
1.15 Red/3.05 Play Misty For Me  
4.45 Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace/7.00 Darklight/8.30 The One  
10.00 Pulp Fiction (M18)  
**AM**  
12.35 Strike Back 4 (M18)

HUB CITY (CHANNEL 825)

**AM**  
9.15 Dowry (HD)  
10.15 Super Boys 2 (HD)

11.45 Fun Abroad (HD)  
**PM**  
12.15 The Gentlemen Of Wolgyesu Tailor Shop (HD)/13.30 Tomorrow With You (HD)  
14.45 Sound Of My Dream 2 (HD)  
16.45 The Gentlemen Of Wolgyesu Tailor Shop (HD)/18.00 Dowry (HD)  
19.00 Hot Door Night XV (HD)  
20.00 Mr Player VII (HD)  
22.00 Singer 2019 (Live) (HD)  
**AM**  
12.00 Destiny By Love

HUB SPORTS 1 (CHANNEL 201)

**AM**  
10.00 Cycling:2018 Shanghai Criterium By Le Tour De France Highlights  
11.00 Golf: Asian Tour 2019 SMBC Singapore Open Day 2 (Session 1)  
**PM**  
1.00 Presidential Cycling Tour Of Turkey 2018 Highlights/2.00 Tennis: Deuce 2018  
2.30 Tennis: ATP World Tour Uncovered 2019  
3.00 Golf: Asian Tour 2019 SMBC Singapore Open Day 2 (Session 2)  
6.00 Cycling: 2018 Saitama Criterium By Le Tour De France Highlights  
7.00 Motorsports: 2018 Monster Energy FIM Speedway Of Nations Finals 2: Wroclaw, Poland Highlights  
8.00 Multi Sport: Action Sports World 2018  
9.00 FEI Equestrian World 2018  
9.30 Volleyball Nations League 2018 Men Final Rounds – 3rd/4th Place  
**AM**  
12.00 Mountain Bike: Enduro World Series 2018: Spain Highlights

HUB SPORTS 2 (CHANNEL 202)

**AM**  
9.00 Football: The EFL Highlights 2018/19  
9.30 Football: EFL Carabao Cup 2018 Semi-finals 1 Leg 1 Tottenham Hotspur Vs Chelsea  
**PM**  
12.00 Magazine: Omnisport.TV  
12.30 Asean Basketball League 2018/19 Mono Vampire Basketball Club Vs Westports Malaysia Dragons  
2.30 National Basketball League 2018/19 – NBL Slam  
3.00 Wrestling: WWE Smackdown (PG)  
4.30 National Basketball League Round 14 Illawarra Hawks Vs New Zealand Breakers (Live)  
6.30 Magazine: Trans World Sport 2019  
7.30 Magazine: Omnisport.TV  
8.00 Asean Basketball League 2018/19 San Miguel Alab Pilipinas Vs Macau Black Bears (Live)  
10.00 Wrestling: WWE Bottomline (PG)  
11.00 National Basketball League 2018/19 – NBL Slam/11.30 Magazine: Omnisport.TV  
**AM**  
12.00 Wrestling: WWE Smackdown (PG)  
1.30 Asean Basketball League 2018/19 Mono Vampire Basketball Club Vs Westports Malaysia Dragons  
3.30 The Football Review  
3.45 Football: EFL Championship 2018 Matchday 28 Norwich City Vs Birmingham City (Live)

Singtel TV

CARTOON NETWORK (CHANNEL 226)

**AM**  
7.00 The Tom And Jerry Show  
8.00 Teen Titans Go!  
9.00 Grizzy And The Lemmings  
9.30 The Tom And Jerry Show  
10.00 We Bare Bears/10.30 Supernobots  
11.00 The Powerpuff Girls  
**PM**  
12.00 Teen Titans Go!  
1.00 We Bare Bears  
2.00 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu  
2.30 The Powerpuff Girls  
3.00 Running Man Animation  
3.30 Craig Of The Creek  
4.00 We Bare Bears  
4.30 The Powerpuff Girls  
5.00 Teen Titans Go!  
5.30 OK K.O.I. Let's Be Heroes  
6.00 Oggv & The Cockroaches  
6.30 Running Man Animation  
7.00 The Tom And Jerry Show  
7.30 Grizzy And The Lemmings  
8.00 We Bare Bears  
9.00 The Powerpuff Girls  
10.00 Regular Show  
10.30 Steven Universe  
11.00 Clarence  
11.30 Adventure Time

AXN (HD) (CHANNEL 304)

**AM**  
6.45 Kicking & Screaming  
7.35 The Blacklist 5  
8.25 MacGyver  
9.15 American Ninja Warrior 8  
10.05 Killjoys 3  
10.55 Caught On Camera With Nick Cannon  
2/11.45 Kicking & Screaming  
**PM**  
12.35 MacGyver  
1.25 Quantico 2  
2.15 American Ninja Warrior 8  
3.05 Killjoys 3  
3.55 The Blacklist 5  
4.45 MacGyver  
5.35 American Ninja Warrior 8  
6.25 MacGyver 3  
7.15 Kicking & Screaming  
8.05 Instinct/8.55 Seal Team 2  
9.45 Instinct  
10.35 The Karate Kid (2010)  
**AM**  
12.20 Seal Team 2  
1.15 Caught On Camera With Nick Cannon 2

WARNER TV (HD) (CHANNEL 306)

**AM**  
6.45 Top 20 Funniest  
7.35 Major Crimes  
8.25 Supergirl 2  
9.10 The Flash 3  
10.00 Izombie S4  
10.45 Top 20 Funniest 2  
11.30 In The Heart Of The Sea  
**PM**  
1.45 The Big Bang Theory 9  
2.10 Friends 9/2.35 Izombie 4  
3.20 Top 20 Funniest 2  
4.05 The Flash 3/4.55 Supergirl 2

5.40 Top 20 Funniest  
6.30 The Flash 3  
7.20 The Big Bang Theory 9  
7.45 Friends 9  
8.10 The Big Bang Theory 12  
8.35 Young Sheldon 2  
9.00 Gotham 5/9.50 Godzilla  
**AM**  
12.10 The Big Bang Theory 12  
12.35 Blindspot 4

COMEDY CENTRAL ASIA (HD) (CHANNEL 324)

**AM**  
6.50 Just For Laughs Gags 12  
7.15 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
7.40 Mr Bean  
8.10 Your Face Or Mine 4  
8.35 Most Ridiculous 2  
9.05 Billy On The Street 5  
9.30 Takeshi's Castle 4  
9.55 Mr Bean  
10.25 Most Ridiculous 2  
10.50 Almost Royals 2  
11.20 Saturday Night Live 43  
**PM**  
12.00 The Daily Show 24  
12.25 The Goldbergs 5  
1.15 Hot In Cleveland 5  
2.05 The Comedy Jam  
2.55 Takeshi's Castle 4  
3.20 Most Ridiculous Asia With Wah!Banana  
3.45 The Goldbergs 5  
4.35 Hot In Cleveland 5  
5.25 The Jim Jefferies Show  
5.50 The Daily Show 24  
6.15 Caraoke Showdown  
6.40 Above Average Presents  
6.45 Your Face Or Mine 4  
7.10 Most Ridiculous 2  
7.35 Billy On The Street 5  
7.55 Takeshi's Castle 4  
8.20 The Goldbergs 5  
9.10 Hot In Cleveland 5  
9.35 Inglorious Pranksters  
10.00 Funny As Hell 3  
10.30 Inside Amy Schumer  
10.50 The Fuccons  
11.00 The Jim Jefferies Show  
11.25 The Fuccons  
11.30 The Daily Show 24  
**AM**  
12.00 Russell Simmons Presents  
12.25 Saturday Night Live 43  
1.10 Inside Amy Schumer  
1.30 The Fuccons

JIA LE (HD) (CHANNEL 502)

**AM**  
7.00 First Love  
8.00 Entrepreneurial Age  
9.00 Eagle And Youngster  
10.00 100% Wife  
**PM**  
12.10 First Love  
1.00 In The Name Of Love  
2.00 100% Wife  
4.10 Entrepreneurial Age  
5.00 First Love  
6.00 In The Name Of Love  
7.00 100% Wife  
9.10 First Love  
10.00 Entrepreneurial Age  
11.00 Eagle And Youngster

TheStarsSay

**Aries** (March 21 - April 19)  
You are not at your best, but you can still cope – as long as you are honest. It is okay to ask for help.

**Taurus** (April 20 - May 20)  
Someone important to you is responding to your request. Expect good news.

**Gemini** (May 21 - June 20)  
You are so moody, you may bite the hand that feeds you. Try not to get too snarly. Try to grin and bear it.

**Cancer** (June 21 - July 22)  
Your intuitive powers are peaking. Follow your nose. You might get into some good trouble.

**Leo** (July 23 - Aug 22)  
You are willing to keep pushing even when others urge you to give up. That persistence should pay off.

**Virgo** (Aug 23 - Sept 22)  
Things are not that dark. You have more than one friend willing to help – you just need to reach out.

**Libra** (Sept 23 - Oct 22)  
Keep an even temper. The worst you can expect is a slow pace and grumpy friends.

**Scorpio** (Oct 23 - Nov 21)  
Big dreams mean big adventure. You may follow subliminal clues and make pretty sweet discoveries.

**Sagittarius** (Nov 22 - Dec 21)  
You are asking all the right questions. Do not worry if you do not get any answers you like – that takes time.

**Capricorn** (Dec 22 - Jan 19)  
You are focused on one person, though romance is far from your mind. Get yourself less obsessed.

**Aquarius** (Jan 20 - Feb 18)  
You are emotional and might accidentally ruin your mood for something fun. Find your centre and push on.

**Pisces** (Feb 19 - March 20)  
Your great energy is helping you appreciate some new music. Open yourself up to right-brain action.

• Provided by Astrology.com ([www.astrology.com](http://www.astrology.com))

Radio

KISS92

**AM**  
6.00 Maddy, Jason & Arnold In The Morning  
10.00 Carol Smith  
**PM**  
1.00 Charmaine Yee  
4.00 Shan Wee  
8.00 Josh's Goodnight Kiss

ONE FM 91.3

**AM**  
6.00 ONE FM's #1 Breakfast Show With Glenn And The Flying Dutchman  
10.00 Cheryl Miles  
**PM**  
4.00 Weekdays With ONE FM

MONEY FM 89.3

**AM**  
6.00 The Breakfast Huddle With Elliott Danker, Yasmin Jonkers & Ryan Huang  
10.00 Midday With Howie Lim  
**PM**  
2.00 Prime Time With Claressa Monteiro  
4.00 The Curve With Michelle Martin & Bernard Lim

UFM100.3

**AM**  
6.00 UFM100.3 Mornings With Wenhong, Limei & Xiaozhu  
10.00 Lively Life With Kemlin  
**PM**  
1.00 Tea With Yuling  
4.00 Sing-a-long With Xinying & Weilong  
8.00 Feel The Night With Chengyao

96.3 HAO FM

**AM**  
6.00 Morning Drive Time With Jing Yun, De Ming And Jie Qi  
10.00 Lunch Break With Anna  
**PM**  
1.00 Automation  
4.00 Evening Drive Time With Li Yi And Guo Xian  
8.00 Night Time With Wei Wen

Tides

**SUN RISE/SET TIME:** 7:14am/7:17pm  
**MOON RISE/SET TIME:** 4:25pm/3:58am

**TIDES TODAY:** Singapore: 1:54am (1.6m), 8:01am (2.8m), 2:52 (0.8m), 10:05pm (2.5m). Desaru: 1:48am (1.9m), 6:56am (2.4m), 2:03pm (1m), 9:35pm (2.6m). Port Dickson: 4:22am (2.4m), 11:08am (0.9m), 4:33pm (1.9m), 11:02pm (0.5m). Mersing: 1:25am (2.1m), 5:52am (2.4m), 1:08pm (1.1m), 8:55pm (3m).

**TIDES TOMORROW:** Singapore: 2:58am (1.6m), 8:58am (2.9m), 3:37pm (0.6m), 11pm (2.7m). Desaru: 2:58am (2m), 7:46am (2.5m), 2:56pm (0.8m), 10:31pm (2.8m). Port Dickson: 5:14am (2.6m), 12:08pm (0.7m), 5:34pm (2.1m). Mersing: 2:41am (2.1m), 6:55am (2.4m), 2:02pm (0.9m), 9:45pm (3.2m).

For updates and more details, call Meteorological Service Singapore, NEA, on 6542-7788 or go to [www.nea.gov.sg](http://www.nea.gov.sg)



# Michelle Yeoh to get own Star Trek show

LOS ANGELES • Michelle Yeoh now has a chance “to go where no woman has gone before”.

She is on track to become a bigger Hollywood star after CBS announced that she would be getting her own Star Trek show on streaming service CBS All Access.

The Crazy Rich Asians actress – who was among the cast celebrating the movie’s Best Comedy triumph in Sunday’s Critics’ Choice Awards – will reprise her role as Federation Captain Philippa Georgiou in Star Trek: Discovery, whose second season on television was launched yesterday.

“I’m so excited to continue telling these rich Star Trek stories,” Yeoh, 56, said in a statement.

“Being a part of this Universe and this character specifically has been such a joy for me to play. I can’t wait to see where it all goes – certainly, I believe it will go ‘where no woman

has ever gone before’.”

Star Trek executive producer Alex Kurtzman complimented her as an actress who “has shattered ceilings, broken boundaries, and astonished us with her grace and gravitas for decades”.

But her body has also been broken in her mission to excel, reported Vanity Fair.

Lee Ang, at a recent special screening of Crazy Rich Asians at the Museum of the Moving Image in New York, told the audience that she tore a ligament during the shooting of Oscar winner Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000), an injury that sidelined her for two months.

She did not complain about the many bruises sustained from slamming into walls – while suspended by wires – during the shoot.

“There’s no point telling you. We still have to do it,” Yeoh told him, brushing off the concern.



Actress Michelle Yeoh will reprise her role as Federation Captain Philippa Georgiou in Star Trek: Discovery. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

## Chapman To flies to Ipoh just for fried chicken

KUALA LUMPUR • Singaporean foodies visiting Ipoh rave about its cheap and good options, such as horfun, white coffee and beansprout chicken.

For Hong Kong director-actor Chapman To, it is the fried chicken that motivates him to fly all the way to the Malaysian town to indulge.

On Facebook, he wrote recently: “Just for this fried chicken, I am back.”

Malaysian newspaper The Star said he spiced up his post with photographs of the dish.

“So succulent, even the chicken breast can be so tender, it is really out of this world,” To, 46, said.

He also provided proof that he

was not alone in feeling so, including a photo that showed a queue of customers and adding that he did not mind getting fat from over-eating the fried chicken.

Perhaps wary of having to endure another long wait for the dish the next time he visited, he did not name the place he visited.

But when food-loving netizens asked for the address, To did provide it.

The place – Kedai Makanan Canning Garden – is at 27, Lorong Cecil Rae, Canning Garden in Ipoh.

According to online reviews of the coffee shop, another must-try item from the food stalls there is chee cheong fun.

## Lea Salonga’s show goes on even with a broken leg

MANILA • Lea Salonga – whose two shows in Singapore at the Esplanade Concert Hall next month are sell-outs – says the shows will go on despite the singer breaking her leg.

In a video she posted on Wednesday, the Grammy-nominated artist revealed that the accident occurred while she was skiing in Hokkaido, Japan, with her family.

“Now, I’m making this video just to let you know that I’m gonna be taking a couple of extra items in my luggage, namely a pair of crutches.

“I broke my leg on a slope. Clearly, I have not learnt the art of stopping so I crashed pretty hard and I broke my tibia,” added Sa-

longa who won a Tony Award for Best Actress in a Musical in 1991, for her role in Miss Saigon.

But the ABS-CBN News portal cited her as saying: “That doesn’t mean that the concerts aren’t pushing through.

“This is just to let you know I am okay, I can sing and I will see you in Hong Kong, in Singapore, in the UK sitting down more than I normally would.”

She could well have a spring in her step for her shows here on Feb 13 and 14, if she triumphs at the Grammys on Feb 10.

She is nominated alongside her fellow cast members of Broadway musical Once On This Island for Best Musical Theatre Album.

## Ex-football player booted from reality singing show

NEW YORK • Three down, nine to go in the guessing game.

On Wednesday, former American football quarterback Terry Bradshaw became the latest participant to be unmasked in Fox’s new reality show The Masked Singer.

That came after the judges and audience booted him out.

The show, which started with 12 contestants, features them singing their hearts out behind thoughtfully chosen masks.

“This is so stressful, I got to thank y’all for voting me out,” the Fox sports analyst said after his identity was made known.

“This has been so much fun,” he

added, but he said the singing competition was far more difficult than playing football.

Bradshaw joins another football player, Antonio Brown, and comedian Tommy Chong whose identities have been outed.

Of the nine left in the show, based on the clues given by the contestants, judges Ken Jeong, Jenny McCarthy, Nicole Scherzinger and Robin Thicke have thrown up names, from Tom Jones and Emily Blunt to Nelly and David Copperfield.

Viewers have come up with names such as Donny Osmond and Tina Turner.

### On social Media



NOT PREGNANT: Miley Cyrus is practising “birth control” by dousing rumours that she is pregnant. “I’m not ‘egg-xpecting’ but it’s ‘egg-celent’ to hear everyone is so ‘happy for us’... we’re happy for us too,” the singer tweeted.

“Egg-cited for this next chapter in our lives,” added the star, 26, who married actor Liam Hemsworth, 29, on Dec 23. She included a photograph of her belly covered with an egg meme – a playful take on the photo of an ordinary egg which recently surpassed Kylie Jenner’s first snapshot of her daughter as the most liked Instagram image. She added in jest: “Everyone leave me alone and go back to staring at an egg.”

On her part, Elle.com reported that she is hatching plans to be a better person with her “baby” Hemsworth. “You and me baby... let’s take this dark place head on and shine thru with the light of L.O.V.E. Thank you for giving me that happiest days of my life. Yours truly, M,” she wrote in her love letter to him, to mark his 29th birthday last Sunday. PHOTO: MILEY CYRUS/TWITTER

### In short

#### Netflix raises prices in US

Netflix is bumping up subscription fees in the United States to help fund its huge outlay on fresh content.

All three of its plans will cost US\$1 (\$1.36) to US\$2 more, with the standard US\$11 plan now at US\$13 a month.

#### Beyonce drops Feyonce lawsuit

A lawsuit brought by Beyonce over the sale of “Feyonce” items to engaged couples has been dismissed at the singer’s request. She had complained that the shirts, hoodies and other items sold by a Texas company under the name Feyonce infringed on her trademark rights and would confuse customers.

# Love

## in 200 words

**This Valentine’s Day,  
The Straits Times invites you to tell us  
a love story in miniature**

Send us a story about love – true, imagined, funny, sad, yours, anybody’s – in 200 words, 200 being the magic number this Bicentennial year. We will publish the best entries on Feb 10.

- All entries must be 200 words or fewer.
- The Straits Times reserves the right to curate, edit and publish the entries at its discretion.
- Entries should not contain profanity or graphic language.

Send your entry to [stlife@sph.com.sg](mailto:stlife@sph.com.sg) by Jan 31 with “LOVE STORY” in the e-mail subject line, along with the following details:

- Your full name as in your NRIC
- Your date of birth
- Your mobile phone number
- Your e-mail address



# B | HOME



If your goal is to get drunk off alcoholic ice cream, you'll probably get sick from all the dairy before you even feel buzzed.

**MR CHRISTOPHER KEE**, undergraduate, celebrating the lifting of a ban on selling food products with alcohol after 10.30pm **B4**

## S'poreans may have beef with greener diet

Many here eat more meat and eggs than new study urges; experts say habits hard to break

**Rei Kurohi and Shabana Begum Nazeer**

Singaporeans eat three to five times more meat and eggs than is environmentally sustainable, according to a new study published yesterday in medical journal The Lancet and local data. But experts here believe it will be hard to adjust local diets to be planet-friendly.

According to latest Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority figures, each Singaporean on average ate 2kg of beef, 3kg of mutton and 20kg of pork in 2017. This works out to a combined 68.5g a day, nearly five times the 14g which the study recommends as part of a diet which can help counter climate change.

The average Singaporean ate 30kg of chicken, 2kg of duck and 349 eggs. This works out to 87.7g of poul-

try a day, about three times the 29g suggested by the study, which caps consumption of eggs to 81 a year.

The study, which attracted backlash from the international livestock and dairy industries, warned of "catastrophic" consequences for the planet if humans do not drastically change the way food is produced and consumed.

Its authors singled out beef as a major cause of climate change, given the large amount of resources required and the levels of methane produced.

The study was compiled by 37 scientists and academics from 16 countries, who came up with a "planetary health diet" to counteract climate change. It will require "substantial dietary shifts" by 2050, they wrote.

The diet, described as "flexitarian", is mostly plant-based but allows for some meat, fish and dairy. It



On average, each Singaporean ate 2kg of beef, 3kg of mutton and 20kg of pork in 2017, according to the latest Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority figures. This works out to a combined 68.5g a day, nearly five times the 14g which the study published yesterday in The Lancet recommends as part of a diet to help counter climate change. ST FILE PHOTO

includes more than doubling the global consumption of fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts and beans, while slashing sugar and red meat consumption by more than half.

The University of Indonesia's Dr Rina Agustina, one of the study's commissioners, told The Straits Times that the guidelines can be adapted to South-east Asian diets with the aid of local food databases.

She said: "It is also important to increase sustainable animal production such as with fisheries and aquaculture. These changes need to be supported by coordinated action from the agriculture, health, environ-

**While eating more plant-based foods will help, it comes with some drawbacks as many such foods do not have as much proteins and micronutrients like iron as meat. One solution is to eat more fermented foods like kimchi and miso.**

ment and industrial sectors."

Senior human nutrition specialist at Nanyang Polytechnic's School of Chemical and Life Sciences Tay Mia Eng said it may take a long time for Singaporeans to embrace the flexitarian diet, but it is not impossible.

"Singaporeans tend to eat out frequently and are used to mainly animal-based proteins in their diet. There are few vegetarian stalls at hawker centres," she said.

Ms Tay said a drastic shift will require effort from the Government and more public awareness. She said the adoption of whole grains has been a slow process.

The National Nutrition Survey 2018 found that unrefined carbohydrates as a proportion of total carbohydrates in Singaporeans' diets increased from 14 per cent in 2010 to 17 per cent last year due to increased consumption of whole grains, fruits and vegetables.

Professor William Chen, director of the Nanyang Technological University's Food Science and Technology programme, said he mostly agreed with the study's findings on the effects of our current diet on the environment.

[FUTURE FOOD continued on B2](#)



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# Want to go flexitarian? Do it gradually

Start by replacing familiar food with plant-based options, says nutrition expert

**Rei Kurohi and Shabana Begum Nazeer**

For those looking to adopt a healthier, more environmentally-friendly “flexitarian” diet, human nutrition specialist Tay Mia Eng suggests making a slow shift, starting with replacing some familiar foods with healthier plant-based options that are rich in protein. Beef lasagna can be changed to tofu-based lasagna. Have bean soup instead of pork soup. Replace ham and cheese in a sandwich with avocado and peanut butter. She said: “Plant-based food should be increased gradually into our daily diet. The change should be an evolution rather than a revolution. If Singaporeans are told to make a radical change to their diet, they will not accept it.” More plant-based foods have been introduced in recent years.

START SLOWLY

Plant-based food should be increased gradually into our daily diet. The change should be an evolution rather than a revolution.



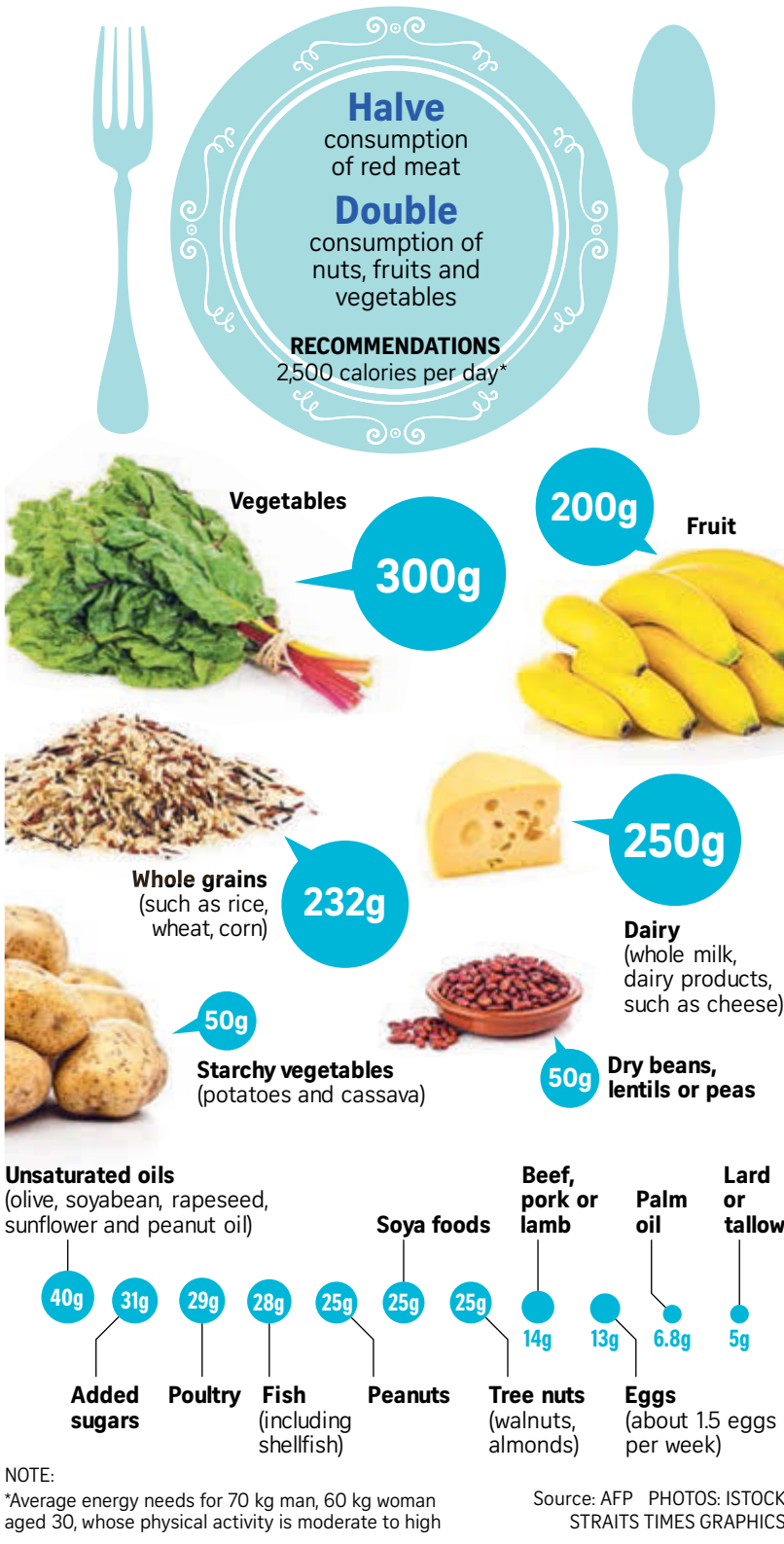
**HUMAN NUTRITION SPECIALIST TAY MIA ENG**

In its efforts to be environmentally sustainable, the Grand Hyatt Singapore hotel yesterday launched Beyond Sausage – a vegan sausage made of peas, fava beans, rice, beet and coconut oil. Vegetarian Society president George Jacobs said there are plenty of plant-based substitutes for eggs and dairy available now, from oat, rice and soya milk to cheese made from cashew nuts and an egg substitute called Just Egg, made from mung beans. Dr Jacobs, 66, who started shifting to a vegetarian diet 40 years ago for moral reasons, said: “I think the change should be viewed as a chance to explore new options rather than as a sacrifice. “Many delicious foods like hummus and salsa are vegetarian. And there are great vegetarian versions of local favourites like Penang laksa and bak kut teh.” He uses mobile app HappyCow to help him find restaurants with vegan and vegetarian options and there are more such options today than when he first came to Singapore in 1993. “I’m thrilled if people would just take the first step... When I first started out, I thought I could never give up cheese and yogurt,” said Dr Jacobs, whose wife is a “flexitarian”.

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The daily plan

Scientists propose major changes in food production and eating habits to enable the 10 billion people by 2050 to live sustainably on earth. They predict this will prevent up to 23.6 per cent or 11.6 million premature adult deaths per year.



NOTE: \*Average energy needs for 70 kg man, 60 kg woman aged 30, whose physical activity is moderate to high

Source: AFP PHOTOS: ISTOCK STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

## How to save the planet: Eat less meat, more greens, nuts

Here is a rundown of the daily meal plan that dozens of health and environment experts are urging the world to adopt in order to sustain a global population of 10 billion by mid-century while reining in climate change and preventing millions of premature deaths each year.

MEAT IS (ALMOST) OUT

The team behind a landmark food study said intake of some foods such as meat and sugar needs to fall by half by 2050 to reduce the global burden posed by the three billion people on earth who are either over- or underfed. Livestock farming is catastrophic for the environment, producing up to 18 per cent of global greenhouse gases and contributing to deforestation and water shortages. Under the new regimen, adults would be limited to 14g of red meat a day – equivalent to half a rasher of bacon – and get no more than 30 calories from it. A quarter-pounder burger patty contains roughly 450 calories and North Americans alone consume more than six times the current

daily recommended red meat intake of between 50g and 70g.

The diet recommends no more than 29g of poultry daily – around 1½ chicken nuggets – and 13g of eggs, or just 1.5 a week.

FRUIT AND VEG OUT

Consumption of fruits, vegetables and legumes, such as chickpeas and lentils, must increase more than twofold, particularly in poorer nations where more than 800 million people get insufficient calories.

More wholegrain foods such as barley and brown rice are needed, but starchy vegetables like potatoes and cassava are limited to 50g a day.

GOOD NEWS FOR NUT LOVERS

Healthy sources of fat such as nuts and seeds receive a boost: You can eat up to 75g a day of peanuts, but will need to cut back on other unsaturated fats such as oily fish on those days.

Ultimately, the new diet could prevent up to 11.6 million premature deaths globally per year, according to its creators.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

## Future may lie in insects, microalgae and technology

FROM B1

But he said that while eating more plant-based foods will help, it comes with some drawbacks as many such foods do not have as much proteins and micronutrients like iron as meat does.

One solution is to eat more fermented foods like kimchi and miso, said Prof Chen. These foods contain microbes that produce essential micronutrients and can supplement a plant-based diet.

He also said that the future of sustainable diets may lie in technology-driven food production. Turning to laboratory-grown

meat, sustainable aquaculture and adopting insects and microalgae as sources of nutrition are some possible solutions.

He said: “Many people still face a psychological barrier to insect-based proteins. I am not suggesting we should all be eating fried crickets. But farmed insects, which are more environmentally friendly than meat, can serve as additional supplements.

“And depending on the species, microalgae can provide carbohydrates, proteins and fats.”

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The speaker, Mr. David Few spent 18 years working as the campus Principal, the global admission director, and the global recruitment director for Bellerbys College, a UK-based international college with 4 colleges at Brighton, London, Cambridge and Oxford.

David is known in the industry as an expert in UK Foundation Year Programs and was the public face of one of the most powerful brands in the Education industry. Most UK-bound foundation year / A-Level students from Singapore prior to 2014 have either been consulted by David or attended one of his seminars.

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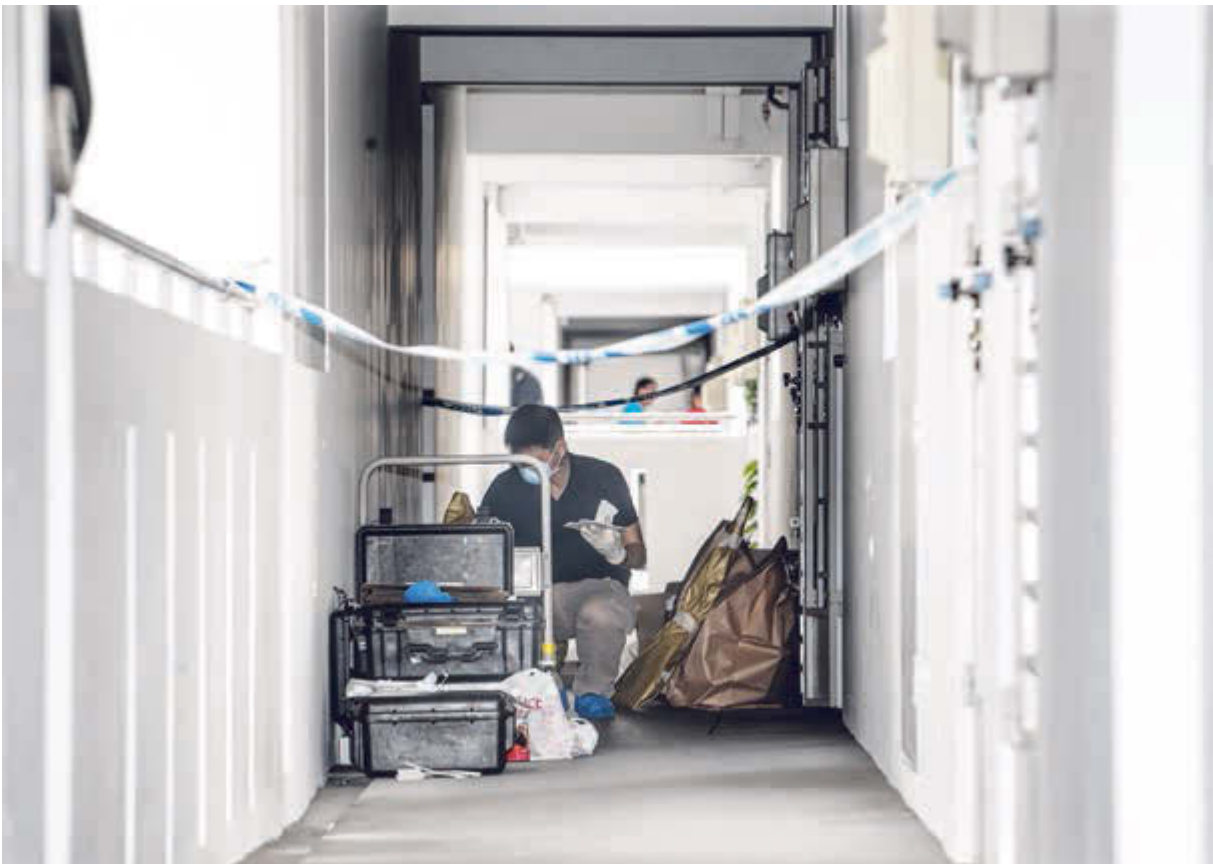
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An officer gathering evidence outside the Woodlands flat where a woman's body was found yesterday. Neighbours said they had heard a woman and a man arguing loudly in the flat for the past few days. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

# Woman found dead in Woodlands flat; man arrested

34-year-old suspect to be charged in court today with murder of 41-year-old victim

Jolene Ang

For the past few days at a Woodlands block, neighbours had heard a woman and a man arguing loudly. Yesterday, it ended with the 41-year-old woman dead and a 34-year-old man arrested for murder.

Police received a call for assistance at 1.34am and found the woman lying motionless inside a room in a rental flat. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Police arrested a suspect yesterday. Both he and the victim are known to each other.

The man is due to be charged in court today with murder. Police investigations are ongoing.

Residents of Block 693D, where the dead woman was found, told The Straits Times that the victim, believed to have been a school teacher, had been arguing frequently with a bald man in the three to four days before the alleged murder.

A resident who lives on the eighth floor said: "Both were shouting at each other and the fights lasted for about an hour each time. I was home at 1am (yesterday) and I heard loud noises."

It is unclear if the bald man was the same man who was arrested or what his relationship with the victim was.

Mr Daniel Hussain, whose 12th-floor unit is almost directly above the crime scene, told ST that he

saw the bald man, dressed in a red shirt and shorts, inside the victim's unit yesterday.

Mr Hussain had walked past the unit while looking for his cat, which had strayed from his home.

"I've seen that man quite a lot," said the 47-year-old resident.

"He sits in the stairwell near my unit a lot, to smoke. He's not very friendly. He also drinks quite a bit - I've seen him (in the stairwell) with cans of beer a few times."

Mr Hussain added that at around 8.30pm on Wednesday, he heard a "scuffle" on the 11th floor.

"I heard (the sound of) things smashing on the ground, it was very noisy."

"From 10pm onwards, all was quiet. Then it started again at about 12.50am. There was a very loud shout below that sounded like a lady's voice and there was a man shouting vulgarities."

According to Chinese daily Lianhe Wanbao, the victim was found to have bruises on her hands, feet, face and eyes. It is believed she was beaten before her death.

Mr Viky, 29, a resident who lives on the same floor as the victim, said he hardly saw the woman, who moved in around March last year.

Around New Year's Day this year, he saw the bald man with a motorcycle helmet going to her unit.

A 72-year-old resident, who lives down the corridor from the dead woman and declined to be named, said: "The few times I've seen her, she was alone. She seemed very gentle."

jolenezl@sph.com.sg

LOUD COMMOTION

I heard (the sound of) things smashing on the ground, it was very noisy... From 10pm onwards, all was quiet. Then it started again at about 12.50am. There was a very loud shout below that sounded like a lady's voice and there was a man shouting vulgarities.



MR DANIEL HUSSAIN, whose unit on the 12th floor of a Woodlands block is almost directly above the crime scene.

## Clinic under probe for hiring locum who is not fully registered

Salma Khalik  
Senior Health Correspondent

A clinic that employed a young doctor as a locum when he held only a temporary registration is being investigated by the Ministry of Health (MOH).

Dr Joel Arun Sursas worked as a locum - or stand-in doctor - at the unnamed private clinic on 47 occasions between July and December 2015, earning a total of \$13,000.

At that time, he was also employed by MOH Holdings (MOHH) - the holding company for Singapore's healthcare institutions - and working at a public hospital with a temporary registration in order to gain his certificate of experience that would allow him to seek full registration.

He worked as a locum at the other clinic to earn extra money to visit his former girlfriend in Canada, but in doing so, he breached the conditions of his medical registration.

A spokesman for the Singapore Medical Council (SMC) said: "For a

doctor to work as a locum independently, he/she needs to be fully registered with the Singapore Medical Council and hold a valid practising certificate."

The hospital he was working at discovered what he was doing after noticing that he had issued four medical certificates (MCs) for himself using the unnamed clinic's letter head.

However, he had signed the MCs as a locum without stating his name, giving the impression that they had been issued by a different doctor.

Last year, a Singapore Medical Council disciplinary tribunal suspended Dr Sursas for three years for that and for issuing MCs for himself so that he could work at the clinic instead of at the public hospital where he was working under supervision.

It also imposed a \$15,000 fine, censured him for his behaviour and made him pay the cost of the hearing.

In coming to its decision, the tribunal said: "The conditions of temporary registration were put in

place to ensure accountability by the doctor, and to safeguard the best interests of patients. These conditions cannot be breached with impunity."

Should Dr Sursas want to continue working as a doctor here after his suspension he will have to apply to the SMC.

He is currently not on the Registry of Doctors, which lists all medical practitioners, whether they are fully, conditionally, temporarily or provisionally registered.

Given that Dr Sursas was not fully registered and was employed by MOHH, the clinic should not have used him as a locum to see patients. A spokesman for MOH told The Straits Times that private clinics "need to ensure that they employ registered medical practitioners in their clinics".

She added: "Investigations into the clinic are ongoing."

It is not known whether any penalties, besides a warning from the ministry, can be imposed on the clinic for such a breach.

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## Non-beverage items with alcohol can be sold at all hours from today

**Timothy Goh**

With this change, all non-beverage food products containing alcohol can be sold and consumed after 10.30pm in public places.

A hand holds a tub of Odders Ice Cream, Rum Rum Raisin flavor, in a grocery store aisle. The tub is orange with a purple label that says "3.9% ALCOHOL" and "RUM RUM RAISIN™". In the background, a sign reads "NO SALE OF ALCOHOL FROM 1030PM TO 7AM".

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**Last April, FairPrice restricted the sale of Udders ice cream with alcohol content exceeding 0.5 per cent to comply with the Liquor Control (Supply and Consumption) Act.**  
ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM

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**Rahimah Rashith**

"The need has grown more pressing. Our ageing population

Even though fees are chargeable, Ms Chia would not rule out pro-bono cases, even as she takes on full cases. "People should not look at the fees as a starting point to determine whether they need a professional deputy or donee," she said. "Rather, they should look at their own needs and plan for the long term."

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# DURIAN SCIENCE

## NTU scientists turn seeds of the fruit into natural food stabiliser and probiotics

Cheryl Teh

A team of researchers at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) may have given durian fans another reason to hail the king of fruits.

The scientists have found a way to turn durian seeds into a food stabiliser (a binding ingredient used to give food items a uniform texture) and probiotics – good bacteria that, when consumed, help people to maintain a healthy digestive system.

The thorny fruit is popular in Singapore and the rest of South-east Asia. In the first half of last year, Singaporeans consumed six million durians.

Professor William Chen, director of NTU's food science and technology programme, saw this as a golden opportunity to salvage by-

products from the seeds of some 12 million durians eaten each year.

The seeds, each about 3cm to 4cm in diameter, are usually discarded after the flesh is eaten.

With a technique that has since been patented, Prof Chen's team has turned what would otherwise be food waste into usable products.

"A majority of consumer food contain food stabilisers, which are indispensable in ensuring that various ingredients that do not mix well can gel harmoniously. What we have done is to use something we often ignore when eating durians – their seeds – to produce a 100 per cent natural food stabiliser that can even keep our gut system healthy," said Prof Chen.

Prof Chen said that a majority of these stabilisers are now harvested from the gum of acacia trees. It is commonly imported from Africa, and is not something that can be



Professor William Chen, director of Nanyang Technological University's food science and technology programme, Dr Jaslyn Lee, NTU research fellow, and their team turned food waste into usable products. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

mass-produced here.

"With climate change rapidly affecting seasonal harvests, alternative and more sustainable sources need to be explored," Prof Chen said.

He said the durian seeds are first sliced and boiled to extract the gum within. On its own, the gum can be used as a natural food stabiliser. These stabilisers, which contain sugar-protein biopolymers, are

commonly used to give food products a smooth texture.

The durian gum stabiliser also holds together ingredients which are prone to separating – for example, when gelatin and a form of gum are added to soft candy and sweeteners.

It can also act as an emulsifier in lotions and cosmetics, to prevent the ingredients from breaking apart.

But several more steps are needed to turn the gum, a cheap medium to grow bacteria, into a stabiliser with probiotics.

To grow probiotic bacteria, the durian seed gum is allowed to ferment with some added bacteria cultures for several days and centrifuged – a process that removes all moisture from a solution.

The result is a light pink probiotic powder.

The scientists say that compared with regular powder-based probiotics found in commercial food stabilisers, what they developed has been found to be 20 per cent more effective in keeping probiotics in the stabiliser alive.

At 4 deg C – a temperature which can be reached with a household refrigerator – the probiotic count of commercial stabilisers went down significantly after five weeks, while the durian seed stabiliser allowed probiotic counts to stay stable for two months.

This is important, said Prof Chen, as the probiotics need to have a long enough lifespan to increase the shelf life of products with probiotics in them.

Prof Chen believes this process will make probiotic compounds more than four times cheaper: from \$60 for one litre of growth medium now in the industry to \$13 per litre.

Ms Shilpa Thakker, senior director for research, quality, nutrition, and technology at Kellogg Asia Pacific, said of the NTU team's discovery: "This innovation allows us to use food by-products to develop functional ingredients."

"Future studies should now address challenges associated with the taste and texture of new ingredients harvested from food by-products."

Despite its origins, the durian gum probiotic did not taste like the fruit or smell like it.

Prof Chen's NTU research team is currently exploring several industry partnerships with interested companies, including multinational companies in the local food and beverage business.

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## Opposition politician submits cheques ahead of bankruptcy hearing

Selina Lum  
Law Correspondent

Opposition politician and lawyer Lim Tean, who owes US\$150,000 (\$203,000) to a Shanghai businessman, submitted two cheques on Wednesday to settle the debt ahead of a bankruptcy hearing scheduled for yesterday.

The bankruptcy hearing has now

been adjourned for two weeks and if the cheques clear, Mr Lim will avoid bankruptcy.

Bankruptcy could cast doubts on whether Mr Lim is able to contest in the next general election, due by April 2021. Undischarged bankrupts are not eligible to stand for election.

The proceedings arise from a civil suit that Mr Huang Min filed in 2017 against Mr Lim over a disputed loan

of US\$150,000. Mr Huang produced a copy of the loan agreement, signed by both men in September 2013, in which he was identified as "lender" and Mr Lim as "borrower".

The repayment deadline was stated as Nov 30 that year, but no payment was made, said Mr Huang.

He also produced an e-mail from Mr Lim in February 2017, in which the defendant assured Mr Huang

that the loan would be repaid.

Mr Lim, in his defence, argued that the loan agreement was a sham, and that the sum was actually a down payment for the sale of iron ore to Mr Huang's company in Hong Kong. He said he controlled an iron ore mine in Indonesia and had agreed to sell iron ore to Mr Huang. He said Mr Huang wanted the down payment for the first cargo to be classified as a loan for

his own internal purposes.

Mr Huang, who is represented by Providence Law Asia's Lim Ming-guan, won a summary judgment before a deputy registrar in the State Courts.

On appeal, the decision was affirmed by a district judge and Mr Lim was ordered to repay the loan.

Mr Huang filed a bankruptcy application against Mr Lim when the sum remained unpaid even after a

statutory demand had been issued.

Mr Lim appealed to the High Court against the lower court's decision, but withdrew the appeal on Tuesday.

Mr Lim was secretary-general of the National Solidarity Party (NSP) between 2015 and 2017 before founding People's Voice, which is Singapore's 11th political party.

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# Singtel, Ericsson, S'pore Poly set up 5G testing centre

Vanessa Liu

The fifth generation of wireless networking technology may not be commercially available here yet, but companies will soon be able to test the 5G innovations they are developing at a facility launched yesterday.

Located at the Singapore Polytechnic, the 5G Garage will also be a testbed for promising projects by students, including autonomous cars that "know" the perfect route to avoid traffic jams, surveillance drones that identify intruders using facial recognition and robots that scale cranes to inspect for damage.

The facility, connected to Singtel's pilot 5G network in Ayer Rajah, was launched at the Singapore Polytechnic Engineering Show 2019 and is a collaboration between Singtel, Ericsson and Singapore Polytechnic. Its aim is to co-develop 5G solutions relevant to industries such as transportation and healthcare, and facilitate technology transfers from Singtel and Ericsson 5G experts to polytechnic staff and students.

"The 5G Garage will be an exciting place where SP staff and students will work alongside Singtel, Ericsson



Engineering students from Singapore Polytechnic demonstrating how their project, SP Driverless And Electrifying Car, works at Singapore Polytechnic Engineering Show 2019 and 5G Garage opening event yesterday. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

and their partners to research and experiment with 5G technology, conduct 5G use case trials, and develop innovative 5G solutions and applications for businesses and industry," said SP's principal and chief executive, Mr Soh Wai Wah.

Out of more than 80 final-year projects developed by around 300 SP engineering students, three were chosen with potential for 5G Garage: an autonomous surveillance system that uses drones; a self-driving vehicle that can send real-time videos of the traffic situation to the cloud for data analysis and "intelligent" decision-making; and a pipe-climbing robot that uses magnetic wheels to attach itself onto metal structures and can provide a live feed of its surroundings via a mobile app.

Mr Mark Chong, Singtel group chief technology officer, said the engineering students demonstrated their capability to develop engineering solutions and help enterprises.

"The benefits of 5G will first be seen in enterprises, especially in their digital transformation when they integrate technology into their processes, services and products. With 5G standards largely established, now is an opportune time for SMEs and enterprises to join us in

shaping our 5G future," he said.

Infocomm Media Development Authority chief executive Tan Kiat How, the guest of honour at the event, said 5G will be an integral part of Singapore's infrastructure. He said: "Apart from improved network speed and capacity, 5G's significantly lower latency will allow us to maximise the potential of IoT (Internet of things) and smart city applications. These include autonomous vehicles, robotics or smart lamp posts."

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# Resident and town council working to keep koi tank

They are working on appeal to HDB while looking at addressing public safety concerns, says MP

Toh Ting Wei

There might be hope yet that an unusual koi tank built on the doorsteps of a Housing Board flat could be retained, with the owner now working with the Tampines Town Council to address safety concerns.

The HDB said on Tuesday that the tank would have to be removed as it poses safety concerns that "could potentially lead to injuries or fatalities". These concerns include the risk of the glass tank shattering or children climbing into the tank.

The Tampines Street 41 resident installed glass panels to the walls around the four steps into his ground-floor flat to house around a dozen pet fish, but was not aware that he needed permission to make the alteration. The family goes in and out of their home through the front door of an adjoining unit that they also own.

In response to The Straits Times queries on Wednesday, Tampines GRC MP Baey Yam Keng said HDB had valid concerns over public safety, and the town council is working with the resident to try to address these issues.

He said: "We are in the midst of putting up an appeal to keep the tank. We need to sort out some details... We need to address HDB's concerns, and we hope that HDB can be a bit flexible."

He said there are some preliminary ideas, and the town council hopes to put together the appeal within the next two months.

With regard to concerns about the glass shattering, the tank uses tempered glass, which does not shatter into sharp shards as compared with regular glass, he said.

On concerns that children may fall into the tank, the MP said the tank is not very deep and anyone who is able to climb into it is likely tall enough not to drown. But one potential solution to avoid this risk would be to put up railings around the tank, he added.

As for the electrical sockets and cables connected to the tank that HDB said are exposed to weather elements, he said the town council will ask the resident if he can put up some protection to remove this risk.

"It's about how we strike a balance," he said. "We hope that this can be a test case where all parties come together to work towards a win-win situation."

He said that he is helping with the resident's appeal as he felt the case has merits, citing reasons such as how the tank has lasted without problems so far, and how it has been accepted by the community.

"The tank has stood the test of time. If it is something that is built recently, we won't be able to tell how sturdy it is, but it has been there for two or three years and hasn't caused any trouble," he said.

"It is also something the community enjoys. It is not just the resident who keeps it, but stakeholders, neighbours and children in the area have shared how they appreciate it."

When ST visited the unit on Tuesday night, the owner, who declined to be named, was adamant that the space was his private landing and that he should be allowed to keep the tank. "It doesn't cause any obstruction to people and the laws should be applied on a case-by-case basis," he said.

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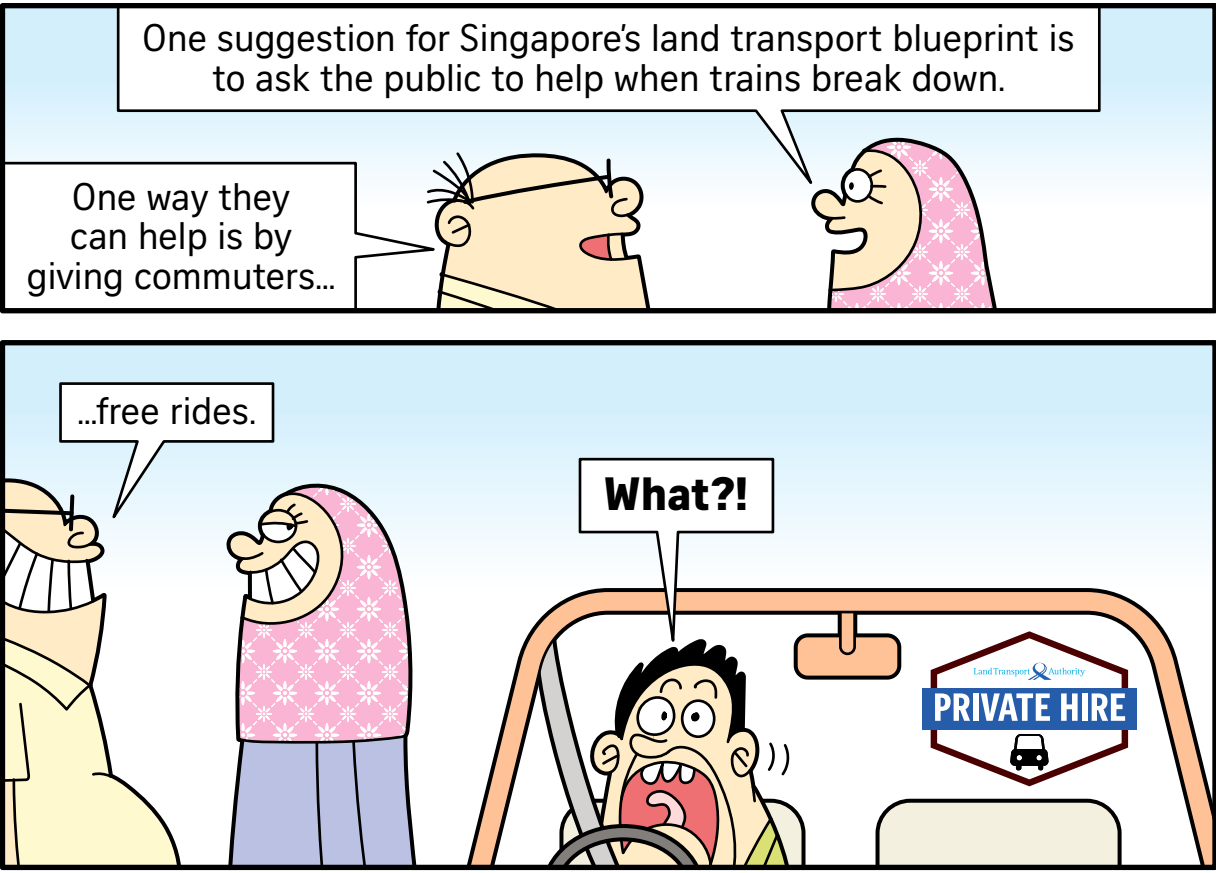
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# FORUM

## cheeky's TAKE



### Provide update on Platinum Dogs Club saga

I refer to the reports on the Platinum Dogs Club (Operator of pet facility arrested amid AVA probe, Jan 8; and Missing dog died while boarded at Platinum: AVA, Jan 10).

First, the owner had lied about a dog that went missing, which was later found to have died under the club's custody.

Second, the cremation of the dead pet without informing or getting permission from the pet owner is definitely against the rules.

Further investigation has to be done to find out why animals died under the care of the Platinum Dogs Club.

How can pet owners stay calm when their beloved pets, whom they consider to be part of their family, go missing?

It has been more than a week since the owner of the Platinum Dogs Club was arrested, and there have been no updates since.

The authorities should provide updates on the investigation and take appropriate action against those responsible for mistreating animals.

**Gabriel Ong**

## Why should S'pore keep calm if provocations continue?

Singaporeans who insist on keeping calm and carrying on negotiations with Malaysia in respect of its vessels anchored off Tuas must be reminded that this is no ordinary dispute (Keep calm and carry on negotiating, by Dr Yik Keng Yeong; Jan 16).

It is an occupation of our territory by a foreign country.

It is arguably the most blatant violation of our sovereignty since the commander of the 4th Malaysian Infantry Brigade, still in Singapore shortly after our independence, insisted on escorting founding prime minister Lee Kuan Yew to the opening of the first independent Singapore Parliament in December 1965.

We did not, as some countries would, repel the Malaysian vessels from our waters.

We remained calm and sought negotiation with Malaysia, all the while tolerating the presence of the vessels in our backyard.

But for how long should this continue? Three months? Six months?

What if "bilateral consultations in good faith, third-party refereeing or adjudication by internationally-sanctified bodies" run into years?

Even after this prolonged period of occupation, I am not advocating repulsion of the Malaysian vessels.

I suggested anchoring our vessels in their waters as a signal to them as well as our other neighbours that negotiations cannot happen in good faith when they continue to occupy our territory.

Whether this is a "primal reflexive response" or "mediaeval mindset", I leave to fellow Singaporeans to judge.

Some Singaporeans attribute the Malaysian provocations to an attempt to divert attention away from difficult domestic issues.

That may or may not be true.

But even if it is true, how is it our responsibility to empathise with them and therefore not react to their occupation of our territory?

Singaporeans must also bear in mind that the manner in which we respond to this dispute is watched not just by the Malaysians.

By not differentiating civility from weakness, we risk giving our other neighbours the wrong idea. That would be dangerous indeed.

**Cheng Shoon Tat**

### Tit-for-tat diplomacy can backfire

Tit-for-tat diplomacy is a flawed strategy that can backfire (Time S'pore responded like-for-like to Malaysia, by Mr Cheng Shoon Tat; Jan 15).

The slightest mistake in perception may result in the complete breakdown of the strategy, and make it difficult to carry on diplomatic functions.

As close neighbours, there will always be high and low points in Singapore and Malaysia's relations, especially after a change of government.

During Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's first stint as prime minister in the 90s, bilateral ties went through a rocky patch. Yet Singapore reacted in a dignified and mature manner instead of engaging in pointless tit-for-tat actions.

Should Singapore respond in kind to Malaysian actions, it may be perceived as revenge, which can turn dangerous if either side miscalculates.

Instead, we should let Malaysia set the pace while we proceed at a rate that they are comfortable with, while making sure that Singapore's interests are not compromised.

Singapore's restrained reactions should not be misunderstood as a sign that we are weak.

While the United States and China can afford tit-for-tat actions, Singapore and Malaysia's relations are too important to risk.

Two wrongs can never make a right, and an eye for an eye will just leave both countries blind.

Relations between neighbours can return to normal once they are on the same page. To get there, think outside the box and make decisions that advance cooperation.

**Cheng Choon Fei**

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# Good international relations classroom best served by open minds

I am all for intensifying international relations education in our classrooms (Teach students about S'pore-Malaysia relations, by Mr Phillip Tan Fong Lip; Jan 15).

International relations, however, is a subject highly vulnerable to subjectivity.

Deans, faculty members and even students may arrive at such programmes with deeply carved mentalities of who the "good guys" and "bad guys" are in the international arena.

Most classrooms of international affairs seem to gravitate towards an accustomed mainstream unanimity.

How can anyone even be so sure who the "bad guys" are?

While Country A would not hesitate to point to Country B as the bad player, I am certain another would be just as quick to mark the former as bad.

Besides, is such a distinction even possible when no country is inherently good or bad?

A more worthwhile inquiry, perhaps, would be to examine each country's failings and triumphs, rather than assassinate the character of any particular country in entirety.

Former US Secretary of Defence

Robert McNamara put things in perspective when he said he would have been labelled a war criminal for schematising the bombing of Japan had America lost World War II.

There's no lack of justification for one's own ideological structures. One will argue they are fighting terrorists, another defending the free world, yet another battling on behalf of their supreme being.

Only via explorations from multiple angles with an eclectic approach to information, can more useful and wide-ranging lessons be extracted.

At the very least, the school

environment must offer safety for freedom of speech and inquiry in the spirit of academic enterprise.

An international relations classroom is best served by open minds, a diversity of views and wide-ranging inquiry – that could mean challenging conventional wisdom too.

To be truly effective, an international relations school must reject the novellas of good guys and bad guys to truly become a supranational institution that produces people capable of solving our world's problems.

Lily Ong (Madam)

## Unethical sales tactics used on elderly

After trying and failing to get my 80-year-old father-in-law's Singtel TV service to work last month, I called their hotline for help.

I learned from my conversation with the Singtel staff member that Singtel had called my father-in-law in December regarding his Singtel TV contract, and they had agreed a new contract over the phone. My father-in-law was told that he would save money with this new contract.

I ended up needing to write down the details of the new contract as the staff member explained it over the phone, and found that the total amount was \$1,739, double what my father-in-law would have had to pay under his previous contract.

When I pointed this out to the Singtel staff member, he told me that my father-in-law would need to call and cancel three additional channels, and exchange his recordable set-top box for a non-recordable set-top box, immediately after six months, in order to enjoy the savings.

Taking those into account, I found that my father-in-law would be able to save about \$44.80 with the 2-year contract.

While this can be read as a well-intentioned gesture on Singtel's part to save a customer a mere \$1.90 a month, I see it instead as an unethical attempt to take advantage of an elderly customer.

First, I think it unnecessary to offer the three additional channels and recordable set-top box at extra cost without fully understanding the customer's needs.

Second, even a younger customer like me may forget to call back after six months to cancel the three additional channels, let alone an elderly customer like my father-in-law.

And the elderly customer also has to dismantle the recordable set-top box, take it to Singtel to have it exchanged, then bring the new non-recordable box home and set it up. Not many elderly customers can do this on their own.

The authorities should look into the use of such unethical sales tactics over the phone.

Kwek Joo Kwang

## Singtel TV cuts number of channels but not charges

After buying the Action Value pack from Singtel TV for \$69.90 a month, I noticed last year that several of the channels were no longer available for viewing.

I was informed by Singtel customer service staff that there was nothing they could do.

Now in 2019, an additional three channels have become unavailable.

Why is it that I am paying the same monthly amount when there are fewer channels to watch than before? This seems unfair to customers, Singtel should either provide replacement channels or reduce our monthly bills.

During my last call to Singtel customer service, I was given the same robotic response of not being able to do anything.

I was told that it was in the terms and conditions of the contract that I had signed, but as a lay person, Singtel should have highlighted this to me before I signed.

I was also told that I was not the only person facing this problem, and I could choose to purchase additional channels if I wanted.

My question to Singtel is this: if we customers want to cancel our contracts, we are penalised, but is Singtel holding up its own end of the bargain?

Elaine Wee (Mrs)

## Fight against litter needs support of public

We thank Mr Lee Yong Se for his letter (Crack down on litterbugs; Jan 11).

The National Environment Agency (NEA) takes a firm stand against litterbugs.

In 2017, more than 32,000 tickets were issued for littering. Repeat offenders have also been made to perform Corrective Work Orders, and there were 2,000 such orders in 2017.

We need the support and

co-operation of the public in binning their litter responsibly.

The community is also encouraged to initiate or take part in clean-up sessions, such as those organised by the Public Hygiene Council.

NEA will continue to work with like-minded stakeholders such as the Public Hygiene Council, Keep Singapore Clean Movement partners, schools and corporate organisations to remind others not

to litter and do their part to keep our environment clean.

In the case of beaches, it has been observed that a significant amount of litter is also brought in daily from offshore to our beaches at our northern coast during the north-east monsoon period from November to April.

Our beaches along the southern coast are similarly affected during the south-west monsoon months of May to October.

During these periods, NEA increases the frequency of our cleaning operations, from four times a week to up to two times a day, at affected beaches to help ensure that our beaches are well-maintained.

NEA will continue to monitor the situation and carry out enforcement at Changi Beach Park. Let us work together to keep Singapore clean.

Tai Ji Choong (Mr)

Director

Department of Public Cleanliness  
National Environment Agency

## Excerpts from readers' letters

VITAL TO RELEASE REPORT ON TENGAH

The Housing Board's reluctance to make public the full report by Aecom on Tengah gives the impression that people in Singapore, and youth in particular, do not have the maturity and thinking skills required to be co-participants in major government policies (Dispute over key findings of Tengah environmental study; Jan 12).

The need to debate facts is crucial in order for our society to progress and to prevent groupthink.

Withholding it is sending the wrong message to youth, and is a step back in improving our education system.

Colin Ong Tau Shien

SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR LOCAL SPORTSMEN

Shuttler Loh Kean Yew's victory

over China's Lin Dan at the Thailand Masters is a breath of fresh air in the local sporting scene (Loh claims biggest scalp; Jan 14).

His victory is an indication that achieving success in sports is not an impossible feat for Singapore athletes.

Similarly, Ikhsan Fandi landing a two-year contract with Norwegian second-tier team Raufoss is fantastic news for Singapore

football (Ikhsan Fandi signs two-year deal with Norwegian club; Jan 14).

This is proof that for those who dare to chase their dreams for sporting success, the sky is the limit.

Bennie Cheok



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## Shopping hub of days past

A photo of Change Alley, a tourist shopping spot since World War II, on its last day of operations on April 30, 1989. The 100m-long lane stretched from Raffles Place to Collyer Quay, and was famous in the 1930s for diverse goods at bargain prices, as well as its numerous money changers.

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